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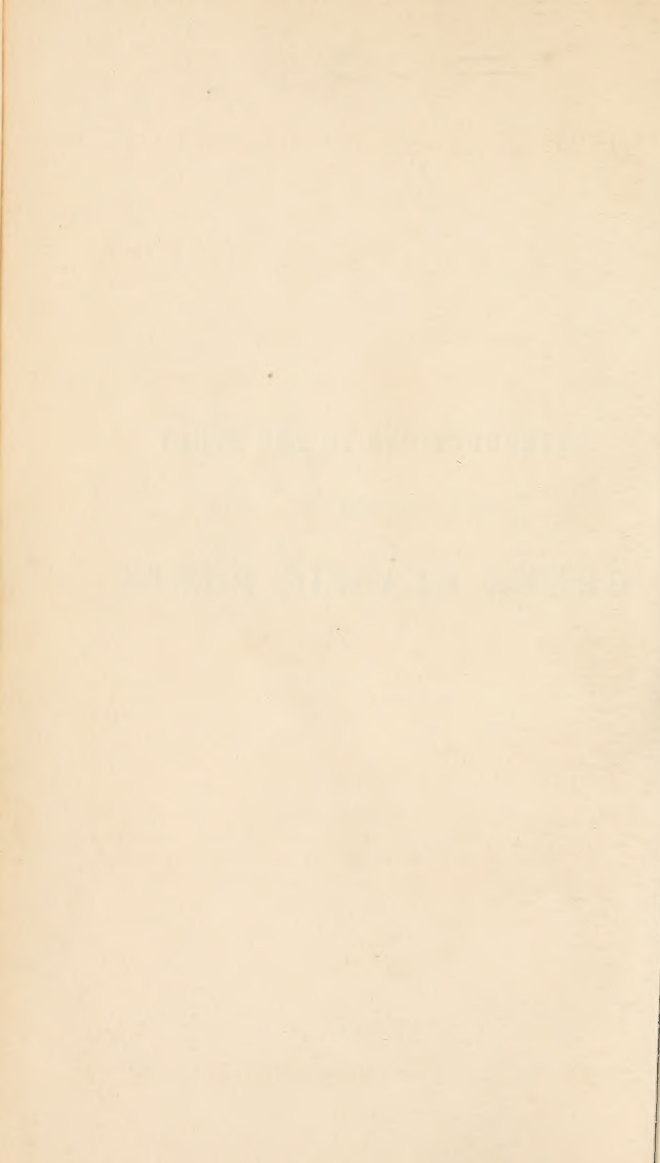


*BEQUEST OF*  
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INTRODUCTIONS TO THE STUDY  
OF THE  
GREEK CLASSIC POETS.





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Homer

# INTRODUCTIONS TO THE STUDY

OF THE

# GREEK CLASSIC POETS.

DESIGNED PRINCIPALLY FOR THE

USE OF YOUNG PERSONS AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

BY

HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE.

CONTAINING,

- I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION.  
II. HOMER.

Ἀγαθὴ; δὲ τῷ νέῳ κυβερνήσειας περὶ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν. ἵνα μὴ προδιαβληθεῖς,  
ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον προταϊδευθεῖς, εὐμενὴς καὶ φίλος καὶ οἰκεῖος ὑπὸ Ποιητικῆς ἐπὶ  
Φιλοσοφίαν προσέμνηται.—PLUTARCH. ΠΩΣ ΔΕΙ ΤΟΝ ΝΕΟΝ, κ. τ. λ.

A young man hath great need of sound direction in the matter of his reading, that it be not to him an early cause of stumbling; but rather, that by virtue of a previous discipline, he may with all cheerfulness, and fondness, and familiarity, be conducted by Poetry to the very threshold of Philosophy.

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1846



TO  
THE REV. JOHN KEATE, D.D.  
CANON OF WINDSOR  
AND  
HEAD MASTER OF ETON,  
IN TESTIMONY OF RESPECT FOR  
THE GREAT TALENTS AND ACCOMPLISHED SCHOLARSHIP  
WHICH  
FOR TWENTY YEARS  
HAVE GOVERNED AND ANIMATED THAT SCHOOL  
IN WHICH  
THE AUTHOR RECEIVED HIS EDUCATION.  
THIS WORK  
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.\*

\* Dedication to the First Edition.



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The **TROAS** from  
RHETEIUM and ALEXANDREIA  
to the  
SUMMITS of MT. IDA.

3 6 9 12

English Miles

The small circles express  
tumuli or barrows.



# THE STUDY OF THE CLASSIC POETS.

---

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

IN submitting this work to the public, I trust I may justify myself against any charge of individual presumption, by alleging the apparent usefulness of the undertaking, if well executed, and also that the matter itself is principally, though not exclusively, intended for young persons. It is possible, indeed, that a perusal of these introductions may not be unserviceable to many well educated readers of any age, and of either sex; but I do not directly address myself to graduates of any degree. By those who are still called boys, I hope the teaching of him, who has ceased to be one, will be as kindly received as it is affectionately given.

My wish is to enable the youthful student to form a more just and liberal judgment of the characters and merits of the Greek poets than he has commonly an opportunity of doing at school; and for that purpose to habituate his mind to sound principles of literary criticism. Those principles, it must be remembered, are of universal application: it is inattention to the universality of the principles of criticism that makes our judgment on literary matters

Principles  
of criticism  
universal.

uncertain and inconsistent. Often may we hear or read in the same conversation or book just and ingenious comments on modern authors, coupléd with the most shallow and mistaken remarks on the ancients; and, on the other hand, though more rarely, we may meet with a sound exposition of the merits of a Greek or Latin poem, interspersed with remarks on contemporary writers, which prove the simultaneous application of different and, perhaps, contrary principles of judgment in the critic. It is true that various languages, different religions, and distant ages, have produced, and will perpetuate, numerous peculiarities in ancient and modern works of literature; but, however these causes may induce a diversity of colour and shape, we shall find that the substance of such works of the intellect is in all of them essentially the same. Excellence in all of them must depend, according to their several natures, on the presence of imagination, fancy, good sense, and purity of language: and all that is previously necessary for the critical examination of ancient and modern poetry upon the same principles is, to set aside for the moment those qualities which are the accidents of particular places and times; and then a review of those qualities which remain, and are common to every place and to all time, will be as obvious in the case of a Greek and English, as in that of an English and a French author.

There can be no doubt that this obliquity of judgment in literary matters is chiefly occasioned by the exclusive study of the ancient and modern writers in succession only, and rarely or never together, and with light reciprocally reflected. Our literary pursuits in youth are as usually confined to Greek and Latin, as those of the rest of our lives are to English, Italian, French, or German. The living languages are considered as interfering with the exercises of the school; and the study of the learned is too often disclaimed in

manhood as puerile or pedantic. Hence, neither are cultivated with the manifold advantages which a judicious association of both would certainly afford. Undue admiration and undue depreciation are the ordinary consequences of this unreasonable divorce; and whilst, by partial and half-learned criticism, some insignificant works on each side have attracted undeserved attention, the great writers of both sides are the less honoured and the less understood.

One truth can never be expressed too strongly, Purity of  
language. that purity of language is the general condition and token of all other literary excellence. Great genius, indeed, generally gives, or compels the acquisition of, a mastery over language: it is the organ necessary for its manifestation. This correct diction, however, does not consist merely or chiefly in the use of words sanctioned by what is called authority, but in a logical harmony of expressions with the thoughts, so that the exact image or conception intended by the writer may be conveyed to the mind of the reader. "By familiarizing the mind," says Mr. Coleridge, "to equivocal expressions, that is, such as may be taken in two or more different meanings, we introduce confusion of thought, and furnish the sophist with his best and handiest tools. For the juggle of sophistry consists, for the greater part, in using a word in one sense in the premiss, and in another sense in the conclusion. We should accustom ourselves to think and reason in precise and stedfast terms, even although custom, or the deficiency or the corruption of the language, will not permit the same strictness in speaking."—"Let distinctness in expression advance side by side with distinction in thought. For one useless subtlety in our elder divines and moralists, I will produce ten sophisms of equivocation in the writings of our modern preceptors; and, for one error resulting from excess in distinguishing the indifferent, I would show ten mis-

chievous delusions from the habit of confounding the diverse."\* Words are not only the signs of all thoughts, but seem originally, though subject to several exceptions, to have been the very mental pictures of all visible things. To use words, therefore, in their primary and most simple meaning, is a good general rule for preserving purity and truth of diction. Nor will such a rule of style, properly applied, limit the powers or weaken the splendour of the writer; as may be inferred from the fact, that some of the most splendid poets in the world have been those, through whose transparent language the face and form of external objects are visible to the mind's eye. Homer, Pindar, Dante, and Chaucer, are, in this respect, among the most faultless of writers. They found and used their native tongues in the freshness of youth, when as yet neither the debasing usages of social converse, nor the misdirected action of metaphysical reasoning had blunted the sharpness, or dimmed the colours, or confused the simplicity of words. In their verses we see sights and hear sounds. Living before the inevitable power of association had distracted the unity and entireness of their own conceptions, even to us also they seem absolutely above its reach. In them the plainest narrative is not prosaic, nor the most homely images vulgar. Consider, as instances of this vividness of representation and this immunity from low associations, the details of the banquets and other incidents of domestic life in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the pilgrimage of Dante through the nine circles of the *Inferno*, and almost the whole of the *Knight's Tale*, and the *Troilus and Cresseide*,—I may say all that is not evidently meant for farce in the works of the bright and morning star of our own literature.

It is not, perhaps, possible in the maturity, much

\* *Aids to Reflection*, pp. 34, 35. 2d ed.



less in the decline, of any literature, to paint in words as Pindar and Dante have done. Yet it still is possible to look at them as models in this particular, to learn from them and their great original compeers the pure idiom of the Muses, and to stamp upon our minds their union of simplicity, truth, and force, as the conservative law of all poetry. If it were necessary to make their merit in this point more conspicuous by a contrast with the opposite defect, it could not be done more strikingly than by comparing a book of Pope's translation with a book of the original *Iliad*, and almost any part of Lucan with almost any part of Dante or Chaucer. It is not only the whole difference between seeing and hearing of a thing, but of hearing a confused narrative of it. In Pope and Lucan, the representative truth of language in the description of external objects is often lost: lay aside the metre and the rhythm, translate the sentence into Greek or Latin, and it will be a matter of wonder to you that such trivialisms, such absurdities, could ever pass for genuine poetry. Apply the same process to Homer, Dante, or Chaucer; lay the body of a passage bare, decompose it to the utmost of your power,—the grace of words, the melody of sounds, may indeed be destroyed, yet good sense will in every instance remain, as the salt and substance of the whole.

It is the more necessary to call the youthful student's attention pointedly to the importance of this rule, because it is frequently violated or indirectly rendered of no effect, as far as his own compositions are concerned, by the prevalent estimate of what is called authority for words. That boys should be taught to refer to the works of the great classics as to so many storehouses for individual words, is proper; the abuse is, that not only are words thus taken at random and without reference to the context which, perhaps, alone made their use legitimate, but a superstitious reverence for the

diction of the qualified writers in the mass is generated, which is apt to blind the judgment of the master to many heavy faults inherent in the pupil's composition itself. Exception is rarely taken to the language of a school exercise, if no word is used in it but what may be found in the pages of some classic of Augustan reputation; whereas a strict compliance with that condition is quite compatible with an admission of false metaphors, false description, and an utter neglect of all truth of thought in general. It is certain, indeed, that we can hardly now detect in a dead language all the little deflections from the highest standard of writing, which must have been as apparent to the contemporary critic as similar faults are to us in compositions of our own times; and he who should now pretend to point out the barbarisms of Demosthenes or the provincialisms of Livy, would probably display more presumption than acuteness in the attempt. But the rules of logic are unchanging and universal, and any violation of them will be as obvious to the careful student in Latin or Greek as they might be in English; and it may well be added, that unless the classics be read with such a kind and degree of attention that the logic, or, in other words, the connected meaning of the writer, is really understood, they will be read to no rational or worthy purpose at all. But it must be remembered that there are two kinds of logic;—the logic of syllogism, depending on grammar; and the logic of passion, depending on a real unity or integrity in the image or thought intended to be conveyed. Many a metaphor may be false by the one system, and true by the other; for the logic of passion, when it operates at all, overrules the logic of grammar. A collision, also, between the two is sometimes seen in instances where a worn out metaphor—and which, therefore, in fact, has ceased to be a metaphor—is involved in a juxta-position grammatically incongruous with a figure still considered and felt to be

metaphorical;—as in Shakspeare's "Take up arms against a sea of troubles,"—where the expression of taking up arms is not intended to convey any figure, but the simple notion of resisting. There is more need of adverting to the logic or reasonableness of passion in dramatic writing than in any other, although Pindar, and all high lyric poets in general, also demand its frequent allowance.

*Etymology.* It follows from the foregoing remarks, if they are well founded, that it is of the utmost importance in studying Greek, to search out the radical word or words of every compound, and also the literal, and therefore primary, meaning of the roots themselves. Without this discipline, a boy's scholarship will be laid up rather in the lumber-room of his memory, than be prepared for his use in the workshop of his mind. No regulations can be too peremptory in requiring proof that this labour has been undergone. But it must always be borne in mind, that the mere hunting out of the root will be of little use, unless not only its original signification be known, but likewise the process by which, single or in composition, it has acquired a modified, or a metaphorical, meaning, be clearly perceived. The knowledge of the direct meaning of the ultimate root of every word—as far back as we can with any probability go—is the firm foundation upon which the philologist must build up his system. The positive value of this knowledge, taken by itself, is considerable in the acquisition of any language; but it is relatively of the greatest importance in the study of those languages which are the most independent of others, and consequently the more strictly self-evolved. Hence it should be an object of greater care in Greek than in Latin, and in German than in French, Italian, or Spanish; because it is obvious that in Greek or German, a root experiencing in general those modifications only which may arise within the limits of one,

and that a homogeneous, language, must, in nine instances out of ten, lead more conclusively to the meaning of the derivative word, wherever and however found, than can be the case where the idioms of different national modes of speech have operated upon a common term. It will be found, therefore, that the actual meaning of an Italian or English word, the root of which is Greek or Latin, can scarcely ever be ascertained with the scientific precision possible in the analysis of a pure Greek or German compound; because, in the former case, the modern derivative will, at some stage or other of its history, have been treated as an original substantive word itself, and associations connected only with its primary modern sense will have given birth to sub-derivatives from it, which have no dependence on the very first meaning of all attached to the old root in a foreign and perhaps unknown language. The fewer intervenient stages, therefore, of interpretation we use, the better; and here I cannot but lament the inveterate practice of learning Greek after, and by means of, Latin,—a practice so injurious to a vivid and exact apprehension of the former language, that nothing but the want of a competent Anglo-Greek Lexicon and Grammar can excuse the continuance of it in any school. The brevity of expression attainable in Latin is certainly an advantage, but surely not to be set against the weighty objections almost inseparably connected with the use of it for this purpose on other grounds. As to Latin merely as a mean of interpretation, it may be doubted whether, with the exception of the French, there is any literary language in Europe which would not be a more adequate exponent of Greek; that the English at least would be so, no scholarlike reader of Shakspeare, Hooker, or Taylor, can doubt.

Use of trans-  
lations.

Another point of some importance to young scholars in facilitating the acquirement of a

full and lively knowledge of the classic writers, is the use of translations. It is generally discountenanced at public schools. There are Latin versions, indeed, printed at the end of some of the Greek authors, but a recourse to these is always clandestine. Now, with a view of teaching the language grammatically, and, indeed, of teaching universal grammar once for all, this is quite right, and could not be abandoned without running a chance of destroying the very soil and seeds of sound scholarship: but the question is, whether there may not be cases in the course of general education, in which a tutor will act discreetly in recommending the use of translations under certain conditions. Greek, indeed, as a language, should be learnt by lexicon, grammar, and exercises; but would not a boy's knowledge be more fairly called forth, if, at such an interval previously, as to make mere verbal recollection impossible, he were allowed and directed to peruse some plain English version, which should present to his mind the entire scope of the work, the original of which he was about to study? And would not the force, and fulness, and peculiarities of any given author, be more strongly and more familiarly seized by an ultimate collation with the best translation that could be found? Recourse to a Latin version of a Greek writer can scarcely ever be justified; because a Latin version can rarely or never be adequate to any Greek original. It serves sometimes to prompt the English of a word, or to show the order of construction,—two points for which translations ought not to be used at all; but it can seldom convey the colour and feeling, or familiarize us with the character of the author, for which alone, except where a previous perusal may be required upon the grounds before mentioned, the student ought to be permitted to refer to them. Upon this principle all prose translations of the classic poets ought in general to be prohibited; for they can rarely teach any thing



but what ought to be learnt in another way; but it seems to me, that it would be very profitable to a boy, if, after having construed an oration of Demosthenes, or a book of Tacitus, he were to read the first fluently and at once in the English of Francis, and the second in that of Murphy, or still better, where it is possible, in the Italian of Davanzati.

These remarks are, of course, applicable only where the ultimate object is to teach Greek as Greek. It would be the height of the worst sort of pedantry to proscribe the use of any kind of translation by those who have no other means of becoming acquainted with the contents of the ancient authors. Indeed, I wish with all my heart that Homer, and Pindar, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, were read in faithful English prose, however humble, by every person, of either sex, who pretends to be liberally educated. A very sensible improvement might be expected in the style and tone of thinking of the clever and prolific, but for the most part lamentably uneducated, writers of the present day.

Another thing much to be wished is, that after a boy has worked out a book or other given portion of a classic poem, he should read it through once more without the let or hindrance of verbal difficulties, and thereby observe the connection of the parts, and impress upon his mind a more vivid conception of the whole. Perhaps it is not too much to claim a place for such a last and fluent reperusal, especially of the poets, in the common course of a first-rate classical education. Pindar would never have been called an obscure or a rambling poet, if this advice had been always remembered. It is here, perhaps, that the salutary practice of learning the poets by heart ought to be praised, and its continuance warmly recommended, under such limits as to length and frequency as shall prevent its occupying too much time, and weakening, as it may do, the

energy of the higher intellectual powers. As it is, the superior facility in composition, and the finer tact in imitating the classic poets—a general characteristic of boys educated at Eton—is in a great degree attributable to the prevalence of this custom.

Most of the preceding observations have been proposed as applicable in the just criticism of the works of all poets, whether ancient or modern; but there are also certain peculiar properties characterizing the Greeks and Romans, and contradistinguishing them from the present nations of Europe, which must be known, felt, and borne in mind by those who would study the classical literature aright. The most essential of these consist in the facts that the old Greek and Roman poets were—

I. Pagans.

II. Southern, or Inhabitants of the South of Europe.

III. Ignorant of Chivalry.

I. The spirit of the old paganism is more freely diffused in the poetry than in any other part of the ancient literature. The Fancy and the Imagination—the one the aggregative, the other the shaping or modifying, faculty of a poet—are the most susceptible of a deep impression from the forms and influences of a national mythology; and therefore it is, that while, in their historians, their orators, and even their philosophers, we may, for the most part, recognize the Greeks and Romans for our own contemporaries of some foreign nation, in their poets we must be conscious of a tone oftentimes completely alien to the moral or popular associations of modern days. Not detailing the chances of actual wars, or (with an exception, sometimes on the tragic stage,) the intrigues of ambition, which in all ages must be nearly the same; not aiming to persuade an audience to a given measure

Classic poets  
—Pagans.



by means identical with those in use in every country ; not speculating clandestinely on the probable amount of truth in metaphysical or religious systems,—the poet, taking his stand, as he did, upon the sure ground of human passion, addressed himself nevertheless to the common heart of his own countrymen of every rank and of every age. His object was to please and to captivate the minds of all ; and when he taught, his lessons were, for the most part, conveyed under the form of familiar fable. The morality of the nation was his morality, the popular religion in general was his also. With him the eternal dwellers of Olympus spoke and moved, and had a being ; with him the common powers or functions of nature were impersonated ; an old and awful Genius lay shrouded in the darkening waves of Scamander, and flowers and sacrificial wine were thank-offerings meet for the secret Naiad of Bandusia.

Yet, as between the Greeks and Romans in general, so between individual poets of either nation in particular, this common spirit of paganism is displayed in various degrees of intensity, and in some instances even under different forms. It would, however, be anticipating what will appear more properly hereafter, if, in a general introduction, I were to enter further into this subject than to point out in a summary way the vividness and reality of the superhuman presence and agency in the Greek poetry, as contrasted with that indifference, if not scepticism, which permitted and often induced the Romans to use their mythology expressly for ornamental purposes, or the mere machinery of a fable.\* Hereafter, also, there will be a more fitting place for illustrating the three marked aspects which that mythology assumed in Greece,—popular and picturesque in Homer and Theocritus—mild, benignant,

\* *Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus Inciderit.*—*Hor. ad Pisones*, v. 191.

religious in Pindar—mysterious, malignant, inexorable in the Tragedians. The relics, also, of a system anterior and opposed to that of the Olympian Theogony, as it is discoverable in Æschylus, and the history and nature of the Samothracian or Cabeiric Mysteries, will become objects of attention.

II. Intimately connected with the character of the religion of the ancient classics is the fact of their being natives and inhabitants of the south of Europe. Whether Montesquieu\* has not contended for an influence of climate on the laws and governments of men, which is disproved by history and experience, may well be doubted; but that the Greeks and Italians, from the earliest times to this hour, have, as nations, been contradistinguished from the northern tribes by a more sensuous conception of the Divinity, and by a craving after a visible and tangible representation of Him on earth, is indisputable. It is not difficult to account for the fact. The inhabitant† of those

Classic  
poets—  
Southerns.

\* Esp. des Loix.

† Upon the breast of new-created earth,  
Man walk'd; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,  
Alone or mated, solitude was not.  
He heard, upon the wind, the articulate voice  
Of God; and angels to his sight appear'd,  
Crowning the glorious hills of Paradise;  
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist,  
Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talk'd  
With winged messengers; who daily brought  
To his small island in the ethereal deep  
Tidings of joy and love.

\* \* \* \* \*

The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,  
Rivers, and fertile plains, and sounding shores,  
Under a cope of variegated sky,  
Could find commodious place for every god  
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,  
From the surrounding countries—at the choice  
Of all adventurers. With unrivall'd skill,  
As nicest observation furnish'd hints

sunny lands, where the light of day is so bountifully shed abroad, was naturally a worshipper of the exter-

For studious fancy, did his hand bestow  
 On fluent operations a fixed shape,—  
 Metal or stone, idolatrously served.  
 And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show  
 Of art, this palpable array of sense,  
 On every side encounter'd; in despite  
 Of the gross fictions, chanted in the streets  
 By wandering rhapsodists; and in contempt  
 Of doubt and bold denials hourly urged  
 Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,  
 Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and farms,  
 Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;  
 And emanations were perceived; and acts  
 Of immortality, in nature's course,  
 Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt  
 As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed,  
 And armed warrior; and in every grove  
 A gay or pensive tenderness prevail'd,  
 When piety more awful had relax'd.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretch'd  
 On the soft grass through half a summer's day,  
 With music lull'd his indolent repose:  
 And, in some fit of weariness, if he,  
 When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear  
 A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds  
 Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetch'd.  
 Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,  
 A beardless youth, who touch'd a golden lute.  
 And fill'd the illumined groves with ravishment.  
 The nightly hunter, lifting up his eyes  
 Towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart  
 Call'd on the lovely wanderer who bestow'd  
 That timely light, to share his joyous sport;  
 And hence, a beaming goddess with her nymphs,  
 Across the lawn and through the darksome grove  
 (Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes,  
 By echo multiplied from rock or cave)  
 Swept in the storm of chase, as moon and stars  
 Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,  
 When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slak'd  
 His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thank'd

nal face of nature; his studies, his exercises, his amusements, were all in the open air, and he prayed and sacrificed in the face of heaven. By a natural impulse of gratitude and of admiration, which acted in the absence of a revealed knowledge of the true God, the early shepherd or herdsman would fain deify the fountains and rivers which purified him, the winds which refreshed him, the sun and the moon which lighted him; but these were either invisible influences, or bodies frequently or always out of his reach, and oftentimes withdrawn from his sight. He therefore wanted a visible and tangible form, which with various aspects might symbolically represent them all—which he could believe might sympathize with humanity, and to which he might raise his eyes in adoration without debasement. Where could he find such a form? His own was the only one. He laboured to shape the log or the stone, but his art failed him. At length, in course of time, sculpture rose to that consummate power, that marble could be wrought into shapes worthy, as it seemed, of that Immortal and Beautiful, of which they were either the symbols or the images, accordingly as the imagination of the spectator

The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills  
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,  
Might, with small help from fancy, be transform'd  
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.  
The zephyrs fanning, as they pass'd, their wings,  
Lack'd not for love fair objects, whom they woo'd  
With gentle whisper. Wither'd boughs grotesque,  
Stripp'd of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,  
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth  
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;  
And sometimes, intermix'd with stirring horns  
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard—  
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood  
Of gamesome deities; or Pan himself,  
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring god!

*Excursion, Book IV.*

was more or less purified by philosophy. After this epoch the creations of the art were multiplied; sometimes embodying the already existing notions of a Divinity, at others boldly chiselling a new figure of the sky, or the sea, or the wood, and setting it up for as much worship as admiration or superstition would render to it. The carved images of the gods were sacred essentials in the popular religion of the nation. No doubts of philosophy, no ridicule of satire, availed in later ages to weaken that congenial fondness for corporeal exhibition of their divinities which their laws sanctioned and their tastes made delightful.\* When indeed Christianity took root in those countries, its converts abjured this craving after idols as a mark of paganism; and so long as the ancient mythology had any separate establishment in the empire, the spiritual worship which our religion demands, and so rigorously implies, as alone fitting for it, was preserved in its purity by means of the salutary contrast. But no sooner had the Church become completely triumphant and exclusive, and the parallel of pagan idolatry been totally removed, than the old constitutional appetite revived in all its original force; and after a short but fierce struggle with the famous Iconoclasts, an image worship was established and consecrated by bulls and canons, which, in whatever light it is regarded, differed and differs in no respect, except in the names of its objects, from that which had existed for so many ages as the chief characteristic of the religious faith of the Gentiles.

This uncontrollable tendency to what has been called in one word anthropomorphism, or a passion for representing the infinite and the invisible in human shape, is

\* "In the heathen world," says Bishop Butler, "their superstition was the chief subject of statuary, painting, and poetry. It mixed itself with business, civil forms, diversions, domestic entertainments, and every part of common life."—*Charge to the Clergy of Durham*, 1751.

a striking feature in the works of the Greek and Latin classic poets, and of those of modern Italy; for it is always in the poetry of a nation that we are to look for an expression of the genuine feelings and opinions of the people, as they exist in the very constitution of the national character. In almost all the great poets of Greece and Italy, the inability to spiritualize, and the disposition to embody, seem in equal proportions; and though it be true that, on the given plan of the representations of the regions of the departed in the *Æneid* and the *Divine Comedy*,—*Æneas* in the first, and *Dante* himself in the last, being supposed eye-witnesses therein—a minuteness of detail is dramatically proper, and constitutes that verisimilitude, which is so charming; yet that they, and especially that the Christian *Dante*, should adopt such a mode of describing that unknown world of shades, and, having adopted it, should execute it with such a depth of body and intensity of colour throughout, is as strongly characteristic of the national propension to materialism of a certain kind, as the very different conception and treatment of a like awful subject by *Milton*,—deeply imbued as he was with the spirit of the great Italian poet who preceded him, and in some degree constrained by the necessity of poetry,—is of the predominance of a contrary tendency in a people of northern origin.

For the reverse of what has been just said of the Greeks and Italians, is generally true of all the nations of Keltic, Scandinavian, or Teutonic descent. A rigorous climate, a cloudy atmosphere, immense forests, and the barrier of a frozen or a stormy ocean, made these as habitually the dwellers in caves and woods as those were in the open air. They sought their refuge for months from the unlovely face of nature, in huts\*

\* Solent et subterraneos specus aperire, eosque multo insuper fimo onerant, suffugium hiemi.—*Tacit. Germ.* 16.



under ground, and their joys in a winter of intoxication.\* The most darksome recess of the forest was the abode of the Druid priest,† where the divinities of the ruthless superstition of ancient Britain and Gaul were not unfrequently appeased by human sacrifices. Too rude and impatient to cultivate the builder's or the sculptor's art, they had no temples but interwoven foliage, nor altars but the raised turf. They prayed to or consulted their gods in gloom and in fear, but they did not represent them by any image or symbol.‡ From the earliest period in which we know anything certain of those vast nations, the Scandinavians and Germans of the Roman Empire, down to the present hour, whithersoever they have migrated, and in the exact proportion in which they have preserved the purity of their northern blood, we may trace in their manners first, and subsequently in their literature, a comparative neglect of the common face of nature, or, at least, a constant habit of regarding external images in association with the workings of the mind, a fondness for a shadowy and unreal romance, a seeking after the abstract and the mysterious, and a passion for descending into the depths of the spiritual being of man. Hence, if there be fewer mere pictures for the mind's eye in the northern poetry, it speaks more awfully to the conscience and to the affections of humanity, than that of Italy or of Greece.

III. But neither the spirit of the old paganism, nor that strong addiction to objects of sense, of which I have just been speaking, so strikingly

Chivalry.

\* Si indulseris ebrietati, suggerendo quantum concupiscunt, haud minus facile vitiis, quam armis, vincentur.—*Tacit. Germ.* 23.

† Nemora alta remotis

Incolitis lucis.—*Pharsal.* I. v. 453, 454.

‡ Ceterum, nec cohibere parietibus Deos, neque in ullam humani oris speciem adsimulare, ex magnitudine cœlestium arbitrantur; lucos ac nemora consecrant, Deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident.—*Tacit. Germ.* 9.



distinguishes the classic writers from those of modern Europe, as their conception and expression of the passion of Love, and their utter ignorance or disregard of the point of Honour. The origin and growth of that gentle yet almost despotic empire, which the weaker and the fairer sex at present exercises over the stronger, in every civilized country in the world, are, for the greater part, the work of Christianity and Chivalry. The reverse of such a state of feeling is a general characteristic of the writings of the Greeks and Romans, though in different degrees, and still remains so of the manners of all those nations on whom the light of the Gospel has not yet shone. By the holy religion of Christ polygamy and concubinage were forbidden, and marriage became indissoluble and more honourable; by it women were declared equal objects of its precepts and joint-heirs of its promises, and a husband's love and care became the acknowledged rights of the Christian wife. Beyond this, however, it did not immediately operate. Indeed, what with an increasing barbarism of manners, and the constant pestilence of a corrupt and corrupting priesthood, very much of that mysterious dignity which the history as well as the spirit of the Gospel had conferred on women, was destroyed; when, in consequence of an event among the most singular and wonderful in the annals of mankind, it recovered, or, perhaps, fully developed, a splendour, never thenceforth to be obscured, but in an eclipse of Christian civilization itself. That event was the first Crusade. There is, indeed, but little or no ground in history, for believing that any such system of romantic police as that known by the name of knight-errantry, ever existed in fact; but there can be no doubt that the spirit of chivalry, which so long ennobled, and even now occasionally softens and elevates, the nations of Europe, began to grow strong and general, amidst the individual

combats and disorganized state of society, consequent upon the breaking up of the vast armaments of the oriental Crusaders. The authors of such romances as *Amadis de Gaul* and *Palmerin of England*, and some others, of which I venture to think more favourably than Cervantes seems to have done, must, surely, have relied upon some prevailing tradition or correspondent feeling amongst the expected readers or auditors. If such works did not originate in the recollection or tradition of a knight-errantry in fact, beyond a question, the universal popularity which they enjoyed throughout all classes of society, must have materially strengthened the chivalrous spirit, which Christianity and Gothic blood equally tended in different ways to produce. It is impossible to peruse any work of the imagination amongst the classic remains, without feeling the absence of the knightly point of honour in man and woman: it is one of the most signal and general differences existing between the old and the new world of literature. It ought to be firmly apprehended, before we seriously peruse the ancient writers, otherwise we shall never judge of them aright. Its results are chiefly, but not exclusively, to the advantage of the moderns: it has created romances, and inspired a new and universal interest into dramatic poetry; but, at the sametime, it has been the source of infinite extravagances and unnatural combinations. In a word, the moderns have gained by it in passion and size, what they have in numerous instances lost by it in taste and just proportion. To succour the distressed, and to defend the weak, in all cases, was the bounden duty of the real or imaginary knight; but more especially was he sworn to relieve, at any hazard, a woman from difficulty, and to protect her from danger or insult, at the expense of his life. Hence, and from the ground of that reverential attention to women, common to all

the nations of northern origin,\* (and which operates, even in the present day, to produce that more august conception of the wedded union, which so widely and so honourably distinguishes the English, Dutch, German, Norwegian, and other northern races from the Italians) grew up, on the part of the knight, and subsequently of the gentleman, who is his successor, that respectful courtesy, that dignified submission, to all women in general, as such, which when kindled into passion for some one in particular, becomes the sacred and enlivening flame, by which every faculty of the mind is developed, every affection of the heart purified, and which alone can promise happiness on earth, by a satisfaction of the instinctive appetite, in the light and under the sanction of a spiritual union. So pervading has the combined action of Christianity and Chivalry, in this respect, been on all the people of modern Europe, that there is scarcely one among the many amatory poets who have lived since the revival of letters, in whose writings a new and exalting influence is not distinctly, although too often unintentionally, perceptible. There are, indeed, various degrees of this refinement and tenderness in the moderns, as there are various degrees of the sensual theory of the ancients; but enough exists of either kind in each respectively, to justify us in distinguishing the love of Christendom as the passion of Affection—the love of Paganism as the passion of Appetite.

The brilliant figures and subtle refinements of Plato, and of his profound and eloquent interpreters, form a merely nominal exception to the applicability of the foregoing remarks;—the distinctions taken in that school having reference to the origin, condition, and final destiny of the soul, or reason of

Plato.

\* *Inesse quinetiam (faminis) sanctum aliquid et providum putant; nec aut consilia earum aspernantur, aut responsa negligunt. —Tacit. Germ. 8.*

man. Even taken in its lower sense, the divine or highest love of the Platonists was neither fitted for, nor, in fact, ever reached the poets. It was indeed a noble effort of the pure imagination, and to ardent and exalted minds it might seem an explanation of their own internal workings; but such a reciprocal appetency of spirits, springing from a predestined and immutable sympathy, was not that human love which could be sung upon the lyre.

Dante and  
Petrarch.

Another view of this theory may be discovered in Petrarch and in the minor pieces of Dante, when the love had become human, but was, for the most part, uninspired by any real passion. Petrarch, indeed, was excellent in whatever character he wrote, Troubadour or Platonist; but he seldom combined both these modes of thinking and feeling into one action of the heart. Passionate here, metaphysical there, he rarely concentrates his passion and his metaphysics. To make that double action one, to impregnate philosophy with passion—to purify the heart and to soften the mind—to Platonize, as it were, humanity, and to humanise Platonism—this was left undone by Dante and Petrarch, and perhaps never could have been effected by any of the descendants of the ancient Romans. The mind of the old poets was rarely introverted on itself; and the same objective spirit is manifest in the verse, the philosophy, and the religion of the Christian inhabitants of Italy.

Spenser and  
Shakspeare.

The supplying of this deficiency, and the consequent perfecting of the theory of Love, is the work of English poets. In Spenser and Shakspeare preeminently, and in a subordinate but delightful variety and degree in many parts of the Shakspearian dramatists, in particular poems of Donne, Lovelace, Herrick, Carew, and Coleridge, and in the older Scotch poets, may be found that exquisite intermingling of philosophy, passion, and domestic fondness, which we

all feel at once to be the earthly one thing needful of the virtuous mind, and believe to be the best consummation of our imperfect nature in this stage of our being. The spirit is loved for itself alone—*αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ, μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν\**—(to quote what cannot be translated), but it is loved through the instrumentality of the purified passions ; for beauty in Platonic style, is the virtue of the body, as virtue is the beauty of the mind ; and that Love is imperfect, which affects to reject either the one or the other.

I have now made, in a summary way, the few remarks which seemed to me of general Conclusion. importance to the classical studies of a youthful scholar. But, conscious as I am, that the tendency of some of the foregoing observations may appear objectionable, on the one hand, from the collation of the ancients and moderns, and from the exceptions taken to the use of Latin as a mean for learning Greek ; and, on the other hand, fearing, in these days when theories of what is called a scientific education seem likely to drive all taste and learning out of the country, that it might be inferred that my intention was in any respect to lower the rank or estimation of those languages themselves ; I must not finish this Introduction without most earnestly protesting against any such conclusion, so contrary to my judgment and my inclinations. However one of those tongues may be an imperfect exponent of the other, it is in itself admirable. Nay, I think all the great masters of the ancient literatures had this one natural advantage over all, who, in modern times, have attempted to tread in their footsteps in the race of immortality. The Greek and the Roman caught, each from his mother's lips, a language which gave them heroic mastery in the contest, without any labour of

\* Plato. Sympos. "Itself alone by itself, eternally one and single."



their own. We may even now hear them challenging posterity in charmed accents, and daunting our rivalry with armour of celestial temper.

I am not one whose lot it has been to grow old in literary retirement, devoted to classical studies with an exclusiveness which might lead to an overweening estimate of these two noble languages. Few, I will not say evil, were the days allowed to me for such pursuits ; and I was constrained, still young and an unripe scholar, to forego them for the duties of an active and laborious profession. They are now amusements only, however delightful and improving. Far am I from assuming to understand all their riches, all their beauty, or all their power ; yet I can profoundly feel their immeasurable superiority in many important respects to all we call modern ; and I would fain think that there are many even among my younger readers who can now, or will hereafter, sympathize with the expression of my ardent admiration. Greek—the shrine of the genius of the old world ; as universal as our race, as

Greek.

individual as ourselves ; of infinite inflexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and the distinctness of nature herself, to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded ; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English ; with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer ; at once the variety and the picturesqueness of Homer, the gloom and the intensity of *Æschylus* ; not compressed to the closest by *Thucydides*, not fathomed to the bottom by *Plato*, not sounding with all its thunders, nor lit up with all its ardours even under the Promethean touch of *Demosthenes* ! And Latin—the voice of empire and of

Latin.

war, of law and of the state ; inferior to its half-parent and rival in the embodying of passion and in the distinguishing of thought, but equal to it in sustaining the measured march of history, and

superior to it in the indignant declamation of moral satire;\* stamped with the mark of an imperial and despotizing republic; rigid in its construction, parsimonious in its synonymes; reluctantly yielding to the flowery yoke of Horace, although opening glimpses of Greek-like splendour in the occasional inspirations of Lucretius; proved, indeed, to the uttermost by Cicero, and by him found wanting; yet majestic in its bareness, impressive in its conciseness; the true language of history, instinct with the spirit of nations, and not with the passions of individuals; breathing the maxims of the world, and not the tenets of the schools; one and uniform in its air and spirit, whether touched by the stern and haughty Sallust, by the open and discursive Livy, by the reserved and thoughtful Tacitus.

These inestimable advantages, which no modern skill can wholly counterpoise, are known and felt by the scholar alone. He has not failed, in the sweet and silent studies of his youth, to drink deep at those sacred fountains of all that is just and beautiful in human language. The thoughts and the words of the master-spirits of Greece and of Rome, are inseparably blended in his memory; a sense of their marvellous harmonies, their exquisite fitness, their consummate polish, has sunken for ever in his heart, and thence throws out light and fragraney upon the gloom and the annoyances of his maturer years. No avocations of professional labour will make him abandon their wholesome study; in the midst of a thousand cares he will find an hour to recur to his boyish lessons—to re-peruse them in the pleasureable consciousness of old associations, and in the clearness of manly judgment, and to apply them

\* I do not think any Greek could have understood, or sympathized with, Juvenal. Is it possible to put into Greek such lines as these?

“Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,  
Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.”—VIII. 83-4.



to himself and to the world with superior profit. The more extended his sphere of learning in the literature of modern Europe, the more deeply, though the more wisely, will he reverence that of classical antiquity : and in declining age, when the appetite for magazines and reviews, and the ten-times repeated trash of the day, has failed, he will retire, as it were, within a circle of school-fellow friends, and end his secular studies, as he began them, with his Homer, his Horace, and his Shakspeare.

# HISTORY

OF

## THE ORIGIN AND PRESERVATION

OF

## THE ILIAD AND ODYSSEY.

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It is not strictly within the plan of this work to enter into any systematic discussion of the genuineness or the history of the several poems, the moral and poetical characters of which I have alone or principally proposed to myself to examine. Whether they were written by the persons whose names they bear in our days or not, their intrinsic merits, and, consequently, their rank in Greek literature, must remain the same, and be equally a worthy object of our studious inquiries. I might, perhaps, therefore, have declined, without impropriety, any notice of what, for the sake of brevity, may be termed the Homeric Question; and surely, except so far as early associations are concerned in picturing

“ The blind old man of Scio’s rocky isle,”

we may afford to be calm investigators of this curious

problem of literary history.\* The solution of it, one way or the other, cannot affect our estimate of the worth of the Homeric poetry. Whether all the poems that are now vulgarly attributed to Homer were his production—whether the two great epics, both or one of them only, can lay claim to such parentage, and whether *Homer* was one or several—seem questions of critical, rather than poetical interest; the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* exist; we have them in our hands, and we should not set them the less in honour, though we were to doubt the impress of any single Homer's hand, any more than we should cease to reverence the genius or the ruins of Rome, because shepherds, or worse, may have laid the first stone of her walls.

It is this very excellence, however, of the Homeric poetry, and the apparent peculiarity of the instance, together with the celebrity of the controversy, to which the bold suggestion of Wolf in modern times has given birth, that seem to compel me to devote a few pages to a notice of the points in question. I shall content myself, nevertheless, in general, with stating shortly what has been urged against the genuineness of the verses, or at least of the present form, of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, referring the student to the introductions themselves for what affects the other Homeric poems, and leaving him to weigh the objections against his own prepossessions, and to judge for himself.

Homer's existence. I believe there is no distinct trace of any doubt having ever been entertained of the personal existence of Homer, as the author of the *Iliad* at least, till the close of the seventeenth and beginning of

\* It is related, however, of Villoison, whose publication of the Venetian Scholia furnished Wolf with the main foundation of his system, that he could not contain his indignation against the audacious attempt, or overcome the regret he felt at having unwittingly furnished materials for it; an indignation and regret, not apparently worthy of a philosophical lover of the truth.

the eighteenth century, when two Frenchmen, Francis Hedelin, better known as the Abbé d'Aubignac, and Charles Perrault,\* first suggested some hints of a theory respecting the composition of that poem, which has been since developed with such profound learning and such wonderful talent by Wolf and Heyne, that its original authors are now almost forgotten. But long before Wolf had turned his attention to this subject, a much greater man than either of the two Frenchmen just mentioned, had published at Naples a work, unknown to Wolf, in which was sketched, with sufficient clearness, the outline of the precise theory to be found in the Prolegomena of the German. The "*Scienza Nuova*" of Giambattista Vico, the second and complete edition of which appeared in 1730, was intended by its author to be the *Novum Organum* of politico-historical knowledge; it is chiefly from its enigmatical style and form, one of the obscurest books of modern times; and Vico's uncompromising reasoning *à priori*, which, seeking no aid from history, will let no history stand in its way, is not likely to make any one a convert to his whole system. But parts of it have of late years been adopted or approved by very distinguished writers; Niebuhr is largely indebted to its views of the early history and real character of the Roman state; and the praiseworthy labours of M. Michelet† promise to extend the fame and influence of Vico farther than the elaborate puzzle of the original Italian would ever allow. As to the Homeric poems, Vico first declares

\* The latter, in his "*Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*;" and the former, in his "*Conjectures Académiques, ou Dissertation sur l'Iliade*." Hedelin maintained that the Iliad was made up "*ex tragædiis et variis canticis de trivio, mendicorum et circulatorum, à la manière des chansons du Pontneuf*."—Wolf, Pro. 26. in not.

† *Principes de la philosophie de l'histoire, traduits de la Scienza Nuova de J. B. Vico, par Jules Michelet.* Paris, 1827.

that the Pisistratidæ arranged and divided, or caused the poems of Homer to be arranged and divided, *into the Iliad and Odyssey*; and that it might be understood how very confused the mass of materials must previously have been, by observing the infinite diversities of style in the one poem and the other. He supposes the Homer of the Odyssey to have belonged to the western, and the Homer of the Iliad to the north-eastern, Greece; and he finally advances to the conclusion, that that had happened to Homer, which had happened to the Trojan war; which, although it formed a celebrated era in history, could not be allowed by the enlightened critic to have ever in fact taken place;\* and that in truth Homer was an individual poet in idea only—or himself an idea or imaginary representative of a people who had no history but song. “E certamente,” says this modern Heraclitus, “se, come della guerra Trojana, così di Omero, non fossero certi gran vestigi rimasti, a tante difficoltà *si direbbe ch’Omero fosse stato finto un poeta d’idea, il quale non fù particular huomo in natura.* Ma tali difficoltà, ed insieme i poemi di lui pervenutici sembrano farci cotal forza di affermarlo per la metà, *che quest’ Omero sia egli stato un’ idea; ovvero carattere eroico di huomini Greci, in quanto essi narravano cantando la loro storia.*”†

The substance of this theory, as it is more distinctly stated by Wolf and Heyne, and their numberless fol-

\* Pascal said, “Homer wrote a romance; for nobody can believe that Troy and Agamemnon had any more existence than the golden apple. He had no intention to write a history, but merely to amuse us.”—*Seward’s Anec. Supp.* 249.

† L. III. c. 7. At the end of this account of the origin and preservation of the Homeric poems, I have placed a translation of Vico’s book, on the “Discovery of the true Homer.” It is not literal; for who can translate this curious writer literally? But, availing myself of M. Michelet’s most valuable paraphrase, I believe I have given the meaning of the original with sufficient accuracy.

lowers in Germany, is, that whether any such person as Homer ever lived or not, the Iliad and the Odyssey were not composed entirely by him or by any other individual, but are compilations, methodized, indeed, and arranged by successive editors, but still compilations of minstrelsies, the works of various poets in the heroic age, all having one common theme and direction,—the war of Troy and the exploits and adventures of the several Grecian chiefs engaged in it. And, however startling this theory may appear at first sight, however unlike anything of which we may have heard, and however impossible in the age in which we now live, there are, nevertheless, some arguments in its favour that, with all calm and serious inquirers, will ever save it from neglect or contempt.\*

It is said that the argument drawn from the apparently undoubting belief of the earliest as <sup>Argument.</sup> well as of the greatest writers of Greece after the Homeric age, and from the general consent of all mankind in the same faith ever since, proves too much ;—that besides the Iliad, Odyssey, Batrachomyomachia,

\* Bentley, before Vico, expressed an opinion something similar on the history and compilation of the Iliad. “Homer wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies to be sung by himself, for small earnings and good cheer, at festivals and other days of merriment: the Iliad he made for the men, and the Odysseis for the other sex. These loose songs were not collected together in the form of an epic poem till about 500 years after.”—Letter to N. N. by Phileleuth. Lipsiens. s. 7. Dean Prideaux had anticipated Bentley. “The chest he left in the keeping,” says he, “of Hafsa, one of his wives; and out of it, after his death, was the Koran compiled, in the same manner as Homer’s rhapsodies were out of the loose poems of that poet.”—*Life of Mahomet*. But, in truth, this parallel is defective. Mohammed’s revelations were, in general, committed to writing immediately, on palm leaves, mutton bones, and other such rude materials; although Abubeker, who made the first collection, and Othman, who made the last, certainly borrowed some parts from the memories of the Prophet’s companions and wives, especially Ali and Ayesha.

Hymns, and Epigrams, at least twenty\* other poems were in former times ascribed to Homer,—that many passages of these poems are preserved which contain variances from, and even direct contradictions† of, the tenor of the *Iliad*;—that in the age of Herodotus‡ the Cyprian verses and the *Epigoni* were commonly considered as Homeric poems;—that Thucydides quotes§ the Hymn to Apollo exactly in the same tone in which he quotes, or speaks of, the *Iliad*;—that nevertheless there is now a general opinion on the part of all modern scholars, as there was amongst all the Alexandrian critics, that these Hymns are not by the author of the *Iliad*;—that Plato expels Homer from his republic on account, amongst many others, of a well known passage|| in the *Odyssey*;—that nevertheless many of the ancients, as well as moderns, who did not doubt the genuineness of the *Iliad*, doubted and denied that of the *Odyssey*;—that there is nothing in this weakness of critical discernment, even when imputed to such great writers as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plato, which should surprise the attentive student of the old Greek literature, it being evident that in the times of the republican independence, the investigation

\* Amazonia.

Thebaid.

Arachnomachia.

Geranomachia.

Iresione.

*Epigoni*.

*Epithalmia*.

*Epicichlides*.

*Capra*.

*Ilias Minor*, &c., &c.

Fabric. *ib.* II. c. 2.

† In the little *Iliad*, Neoptolemus is represented as carrying Æneas prisoner on board his ship. See *post*, in *Fragm.*, and compare with *Iliad* γ'. xx. 307-8.

Νῦν δὲ δὴ Αἰνείας βίη Τρῳέσσιν ἀνάξει

Καὶ παῖδες παίδων, τοί κεν μετόπισθε γένωνται.

Then shall Æneas o'er the Trojans reign,

And children's children his great line maintain.

‡ *Euterp.* 117. *Melpom.* 32.

§ *Lib.* III. 104.

|| *Λ'*. xi. 487.



of the genuineness of national compositions formed no part even of scientific criticism, much less of the general duties of the philosopher and historian;—that as Herodotus and Thucydides quote Homer merely for historical evidence, so Plato censures him for moral or political reasons, for which purposes a reference to these poems was equally proper, whether the common belief as to their origin were founded in fact or not;—that in modern Europe, indeed, at the revival of letters, this branch of criticism became of paramount importance, and conferred the greatest benefits on awakening learning, by rescuing the genuine relics of ancient Greece and Rome from the mass of fiction and interpolation, which a superstitious barbarism of manners and intellect for seven centuries had accumulated upon them;—but that the early Greeks knew no literature except their own, and that, considering how little attention even we, with our different habits and capabilities, ever, till within the last fifty years, paid to the mere external history of our earliest works, we have no reason to think it unaccountable that the chronicler, the historian, or even the philosopher of old Greece, either never doubted, or but hinted their doubts as to the genuineness of a body of popular poetry, supposed to be of Asiatic growth, and of an antiquity open to nothing but conjecture.

It is further said, that the art of writing, and the use of manageable writing materials, were entirely, or all but entirely, unknown in Greece and its islands at the supposed date of the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; that if so, these poems could not have been committed to writing during the time of such their composition;—that, in a question of comparative probabilities like this, it is a much grosser improbability that even the single *Iliad*, amounting, after all curtailments and expungings, to upwards of 15,000 hexameter lines, should have been actually conceived and per-

fect in the brain of one man, with no other help but his own or others' memory, than that it should in fact be the result of the labours of several distinct authors;—that if the *Odyssey* be counted, the improbability is doubled;—that if we add, upon the authority of *Thucydides* and *Aristotle*, the *Hymns* and *Margites*, not to say the *Batrachomyomachia*, that which was improbable becomes morally impossible;—that all that has been so often said as to the fact of as many verses or more having been committed to memory, is beside the point in question, which is not, whether 15,000 or 30,000 lines may not be learnt by heart from print or manuscript, but whether one man can originally compose a poem of that length, which, rightly or not, shall be thought to be a perfect model of symmetry and consistency of parts, without the aid of writing materials;—that, admitting the superior probability of such an achievement in a primitive age, we know nothing actually similar or analogous to it; and that it so transcends the common limits of intellectual power, as at the least to merit with as much justice as the opposite opinion the character of improbability.

The precise fact, whether alphabetical characters were absolutely unknown in Greece in the Homeric age, is declared by Heyne\* to be immaterial to the argument. Known or not, it is indisputable that, down to a period later by two centuries than the latest date of Homer, there were no materials which a Greek author could have employed for the ordinary purposes of literary composition. Of what avail is it to prove that some Greeks had the art of carving an inscription on

\* “*Tam parum conjuncta est cum quæstione de Homericorum carminum antiquitate illa quæstio de artis scribendi invento; tantum abest ut ea fundum disputationis constituere posset! Inventum multis sæculis antecessit usum frequentiore, et in ære saxoque substiterat, donec inventa esset materia habilior.*” VIII. p. 797.

marble or wood? How is the alleged difficulty removed by presenting the poet—and a blind poet too—with a pen of iron and some plates of lead? If there is any weight in the objection, that no one person could have composed the Iliad and Odyssey by force of mere mental retention alone, nothing will ever dispose of it, excepting a demonstration that the poet had some manageable substance upon which to write. In fact, is not the presumption almost irresistible, that the appearance of the first prose writer must have been nearly coincident with the introduction of some superior facilities for composition? Until writing is common to some class or other in a nation, all compositions will be in verse, because verse alone can be borne in memory; but the moment that paper, or parchment, or even a smoothed hide is to be had, the chronicler in prose invariably comes forward. Do we suppose that, amongst a people which had already produced—*quocunque modo*—the Homeric and Hesiodic poems, there really was no person born competent or disposed to write in prose before Pherecydes of Scyros, or Cadmus of Miletus? If so, how do we account for such an outburst of historical and philosophical writers in prose, as immediately followed, whilst the national genius and fondness for poetry abated not a jot?

The more sagacious of those who maintain the unity and authorship of Homer, have seen and acknowledged the truth of the preceding remarks. It is admitted by Mr. Milman,\* one of the very ablest of the opponents of Wolf, that even M. Kreuser's argument† in favour of an early introduction of letters and writing in Greece, leaves the main question undecided. Indeed, Kreuser himself is a follower of Wolf upon the fundamental

\* Quarterly Review, xliv. 121; a beautiful and cogent argument in favour of the original unity of the Iliad and the Odyssey each taken separately.

† Vorfrage ueber Homeros.

point in dispute. M. Merian, in a very clever essay read to the Academy of Berlin in 1789, part of which is quoted in the 5th volume of Cesarotti's edition of the *Iliad*, p. 120, takes the same position; he denies to Homer the use of pen, paper, and ink, but says he might have done very well without them. This is the material issue. M. Merian, after many irrelevant instances of learning by heart from book or recitation, alleges the example of the Italian improvisatori and of Tasso, who, he says, composed 400 stanzas of his *Jerusalem*, equal to 3200 verses, without ever writing them down. What authority is there for this story of Tasso? And, unless there be Tasso's own word for it, who will believe that he never tried one of those stanzas on paper, or slate, or ivory? Besides, it is well known that Tasso had, during many years of learned leisure, meditated and arranged the plan of his poem, and drawn up numerous sketches of it. These 400 stanzas, therefore, at most, were but the filling up of a picture, the outline of which had been already fixed. However, I, for my own part, doubt the fact altogether, as being a gratuitous improbability. As for the improvisatori, those who have ever heard any of their professors in England, or Italy, or in Spain (and the Andalusians set up for extempore poets quite as much, and, for aught that can be seen, quite as reasonably as the Neapolitans or other Italians), will surely not require a word to be said about them with respect to the present question. With a thousand common-places in their heads, and with a language, one half of which rhymes to the other half, on their tongues, these people may, with a very small exertion of skill, pour forth verses, as they are called, to any extent. A noted English wit of the present day can improvise in rhyme, even in our language, as long as you please to listen to the amusing exhibition. What has such a trick as this to do with the composition and correction of the 30,000

hexameters of the Iliad and Odyssey? Nothing. Cesa-rotti, to be sure, talks very gravely of Macpherson's Ossian, which he translated, as an instance of poetry of considerable extent composed by a poet to whom writing was unknown. Upon the history and character of this English Ossian, all sober critics are now pretty well agreed. But lately, in the affecting narrative of the imprisonment of Silvio Pellico,\* we have that unfortunate person declaring that he and his friend Maroncelli composed many thousands of verses in their confinement, with nothing but the faculty of memory upon which to rely. This is one of the best instances of the memorial power in composition that I have found. Still, before even this can be admitted as a pertinent example, it will be necessary to see the verses so composed, and to determine the relation they bear to the poetry of the Homeric poems. For it is obvious that the point in dispute is not affected by the mere fact of any number of loose lines having been composed under such circumstances: improvisation by itself is nothing. Let us, however, proceed. It is urged that the artificial construction of the plots of the Iliad and Odyssey, so commonly relied on as an argument for the original unity of those poems, is, in fact, a demonstration that their present form cannot be genuine. For it is certain, from the censure of Horace, and the unquestioned testimony of all antiquity, that the cyclic poets, who were contemporary with, or followed in

\* “ Maroncelli nel suo sotterraneo avea composti molti versi d'una gran bellezza. Me li andava recitando, e ne componeva altri. Io pure ne componeva, e li recitava. E la nostra memoria esercitavasi a ritenere tutto ciò. Mirabile fù la capacità, che acquistammo di poetare lunghe produzioni a memoria, limarle e tornarle a limare infinite volte, e ridurle a quel segno medesimo di possibile finitezza che avremo attenuto scrivendole. Maroncelli compose così a poco a poco, e ritenne in mente parecchie migliaja di versi lirici ed epici. Io feci la tragedia di Leoniero da Dertona e varie altre cose.”—*Le mie Prigioni*, c. 75.



order of time the age of Homer, one and all, without a single exception, composed their works upon a plan the very reverse of that which the critics praise so highly in the structure of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It may be seen, as well from the poem of Quintus Smyrnaeus, which is founded on the *Æthiopis*, *Ilias Parva*, and *Illi Excidium* of Arctinus and Lesches, as from the epitomes of many of the other old cyclic poems, still preserved in the fragments of the *Chrestomathia* of Proclus, if such evidence be not superfluous, that the authors of the *Dionysiaca*, the *Thebais*, *Epigoniads*, *Naupactica*, *Genealogies*, and the other works of that sort, never dreamed of plunging in *medias res*, as it is said that Homer does, never laid distant trains for future catastrophes, as Mr. Milman says is so remarkable in the *Iliad*, never carried on parallel lines of narrative, never took thought for a beginning, a middle, or an end. They uniformly begin with the egg, and conclude when the war or the pedigree is at an end. They have no hero, in favour of whose dramatic superiority all others are depressed; they have no single primary action, relieved by episodes; they are ignorant of concealments, of turning points, of recognitions, and of windings up. Just as in the Indian and Persian epics, in the northern Eddas, in the poem of the *Cid*, in the early chronicles of every nation with which we are acquainted, one story follows another story in the order of mere history; and the skill and fire of the poet are shown, not in the artifice of grouping a hundred figures into one picture, but in raising admiration by the separate beauty of each successive image. They tell the tale as the tale had been told to them, and leave out nothing.

Now, if the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, such as we have them at this day, were previously in existence, or if any poems so constructed were publicly known,—and known they surely must have been, as well from their own excellence, as from the recency and popu-



larity of the general subject,—how can we reasonably account for the undeniable fact, that this brilliant example did not find a single imitator amongst the contemporaries or followers of Homer for centuries afterwards? It cannot be said that no poet arose of sufficient genius to effect this; the names of many of the old heroic poets were celebrated in the best ages of Greece; and it would certainly be an easier task to rival the plots than the poetry of the Homeric epics. At least an attempt might have been expected; and what the lowest poetaster now does first and best, could not be beyond the powers of Hesiod and the authors of the *Theogonia*. To suppose that the cyclic poets of their own wilfulness preferred

*Fortunam Priami cantabo, et nobile bellum,*

is saying worse of them than Horace seems to mean, or than other testimonies can allow us to believe; to assume their ignorance of the example, is strangely to discredit or diminish the popularity and influence so universally, and, as I doubt not, so truly ascribed to the Homeric song. Quintus Smyrnæus or Calaber composed his books as a supplement to the unfinished *Iliad*. We may not rate Quintus very highly as a poet; but have we any right to set him down for such a heavy fool as to have ventured upon the completion of a divine poem, which Aristotle had declared absolutely perfect in its plot, if the numerous examples of former writers of supplements in the older times had not been lying before his eyes? Suppose, for a moment, that the *Iliad* handed down to us, had ended, as surely it might have ended, in the death of Hector, and the return of Achilles in triumph to the Greek camp, and that the substance of the last two books had been added by Quintus in the beginning of his supplement; should we have commended him the more, for sagaciously detecting the want of finish, the premature

termination of the narrative ? And, with deference be it spoken, is it not possible that Aristotle might have lauded the plot of the *Iliad* nothing the less if the catalogue of the ships and troops had never been inserted ?

Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Aristarchus, doubted the genuineness of the conclusion of the *Odyssey* from the 297th verse of the 23d book. Modern critics have very generally adopted the same opinion ; and Mr. P. Knight, amongst others, considered it as past dispute, although he was a warm opponent of the theory of Wolf. Let it be granted, therefore, to Mr. Knight, that the genuine poem ended with the line which describes Ulysses and Penelope retiring to rest after the slaughter of the suitors, and the recognition of each other. Now, the question is worth consideration, why the remaining lines were added ; for added, it is said, they were. Was the action supposed to be left unfinished till the consequences of so terrible a vengeance to Ulysses himself were made known, and was an amnesty between the two parties requisite to constitute a satisfactory termination of the poem ? According to the rules of the Aristotelian epic, we can have no hesitation in answering in the affirmative to both these questions. *Homer's Odyssey*, therefore, was not complete in the judgment of the poet who composed this ancient supplement ; it stopped too soon ; and some one—not Homer—was found who could write so very like him, that for five or six centuries the forged conclusion was never suspected. The splendid episode of the *Necyomanteia*, in the 11th book of the *Odyssey*, is also pronounced, upon very high critical authority, to be spurious ; yet who will pretend to say that the style of the verses themselves would ever justify their condemnation on the score of poetical inferiority alone ? It must be admitted, therefore, by those critics who reject these large portions of the *Homeric poems*, that there *were* other poets, *beside Homer*, who had the boldness and ability to

add whole books and parts of books to his poems, so similar in manner and equal in merit, that early antiquity never doubted the identity of their authorship, and some of the greatest critics of Greece found, and modern critics must still find, in them many of the most brilliant and characteristic proofs of the great poet's genius. And how can any one, who denies the last book of the Iliad to have been written by the author of the rest, reject the theory of Wolf merely on the ground that the perfect consistency of character in that poem could not have proceeded from diverse sources of invention? Or will it be said, at this time of day, that the Priam, the Achilles, and the Helen of this last book, are unlike or unequal to the same characters in the preceding parts of the Iliad?

It is, indeed, confidently said, that several gaps are still remaining sufficient to indicate where distinct poesies have been joined unskilfully together. For example, the lines 356-368 of the 18th Iliad, which contain a dialogue between Jupiter and Juno, very awkwardly thrust in between the speech of Achilles to his Myrmidons, and the arrival of Thetis at the mansion of Vulcan. And, with respect to this passage, it is remarkable that Zenodorus, quoted by an old scholiast, maintained that it was not an interpolation in the common sense, but was a connecting link forged by the original Diasceuasts (*διασχευασται*) between two distinct rhapsodies. The violent change of scene in the fourth book of the Odyssey, v. 620, from Sparta to Ithaca, is adduced as another instance of artificial conjunction of parts originally separate; and there are many others noticed in the following introduction: and the history of the actual preservation of the Iliad and Odyssey is said to corroborate the probability of their fragmentary origin. Concerning this history there was no great diversity of opinion amongst the ancients. An almost endless list of autho-

rities tends to show that the first form under which the people of the continent of Greece became acquainted with the verses of Homer was that of songs or metrical narratives recited by minstrels, probably with some musical accompaniments, at feasts, sacrifices, or other public solemnities. These minstrels or reciters were universally termed 'Ραψῳδοί, or Rhapsodes, ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων ἀοιδοί, as Pindar says,\* because they *worked or joined together* their own or others' short poems, and fitted them for connected recitation.† The verses sung or recited at one time were called 'Ραψῳδία, or a rhapsody, which could not, of course, have been of a length disproportioned to the occasions which called it forth. A familiar instance of such a performance may be seen in the legend of the intrigue of Mars and Venus, recited by Demodocus to the lyre in the eighth,‡ and, another, perhaps, in the Necyomanteia, in the eleventh,§ book of the Odyssey. The Doloneia, or night adventure of Ulysses and Diomed, and their rencounter with Dolon, in the tenth|| book of the Iliad, is said by Eustathius to have been considered by the ancients as originally a separate poem, and to have been inwoven into the body of the Iliad by Pisistratus—ὑπὸ Πεισιστράτου τεταχθαι εἰς τὴν ποίησιν. The rhapsodes of the earlier ages were evidently the same as the Ἀοιδοί, or singers; these, like Phemius and Demodocus, seem to have been poets, and to have recited their own compositions; and thus published and preserved them apparently in the only way in their power. All the accounts we have of Homer concur in representing him a rhapsode of this description, wandering through the islands and on the Asiatic coast, and earning fame and a maintenance by

\* Nem. II. 1.

† The other etymology from ῥαβδός, because the minstrels held a staff in the hand whilst reciting, does not seem worthy of much attention.

‡ Θ'. 266.

§ Δ'.

|| Κ'. 295.

the recitation of his verses. Subsequently to this, though immediately connected with it, came a second race of rhapsodes, who made it their entire study and occupation to learn by heart and recite such already existing poems of other authors as had become popular; whilst at the same time they were so far poets themselves, as not to scruple to alter, omit, or add to, their originals in such kind and degree as they thought best for the time or circumstances of the actual recitation. The most celebrated of this second race were the Homeridæ, a name given to a school or family of them, which had its head-quarters in the island of Chios, and pretended to be the correctest reciters of the verses of Homer. Cynæthus, one of this school, migrated to Syracuse, and acquired great reputation by reciting in that city. His fame as a poet was so great, that the Hymn to Apollo was attributed to him,\* and it may be suspected that the well-known lines† in that poem, relative to the residence and person of Homer, are an instance of the fraud and the talent of him or of some other Chian rhapsode. Certain it is, that during the age of this second race, a great number of poets flourished, by whom it is reasonable to believe that much of the cyclical heroic poetry, now or anciently existing under various names, must have been composed. We are told of Arctinus the Milesian, author of the *Æthiopis*;‡ of Lesches the Lesbian, author of the *Little Iliad*;§ of Stasinus the Cyprian, author of the *Cyprian Verses*; ||

\* Scho. Pind. Nem. Od. ii.

† v. 172.—*Τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἴκετ' δὲ Χίῳ ἐνὶ παιπαλοῖσσι.*

‡ In the *Æthiopis* were related the exploits of Memnon at Troy, after the death of Hector.

§ The *Little Iliad* contained the history of the siege, from the death of Achilles to the capture of the city.

|| It is mentioned in one of the scholiasts (Il. A'. I. 5.) that Stasinus, in the commencement of the *Cyprian Verses*, related, that the birth of Helen had been resolved in a great council of the gods, who knew very well that she would occasion a bloody



of Augias, author of the *Nόστοι*, or Returns of the Grecian chiefs from Troy; of Pisander of Camirus,\* author of the *Heracleid*; and of many others. Subsequently, for the most part, to these, the names of Archilochus, Terpander, Aleman, Alcæus, and Sappho, are conspicuous; and in the times of Pisistratus and his sons, we have clear evidence of the names and the genius of Stesichorus, Ibycus, Tyrtaeus, Anacreon, and Simonides.

As to the manner of the introduction of the Homeric poems into Greece, two stories are told.

Introduction  
of the Ho-  
meric poems  
into Greece.

I. First, it is said that Lycurgus, the Spartan legislator, fell in with the poems of Homer during his travels in Asia; and, being charmed with them, carried them with him, by some means and in some shape or other, back to his native city. The authority for this is a passage in a fragment of Heraclides Ponticus,† in which he says that Lycurgus, “having procured the poetry of Homer from the descendants of Creophylus, first introduced it into Peloponnesus.” Ælian‡ repeats this with advantage: “Lycurgus, the Spartan, first carried the poetry of Homer *in a mass* into Greece.” Plutarch§ finishes off

war between Europe and Asia, but considered such a war absolutely necessary in order to quiet the complaints of the Earth on the score of a superabundant population.—*Schoell Lit. Grecque*, i. 167. I do not remember to have seen a reference to this in any edition of Mr. Malthus's work.

\* The Alexandrians assigned to Pisander the first rank amongst heroic poets after Homer and Hesiod.

† In fragm. *Πολιτειῶν*.—τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν παρὰ τῶν ἀπογόνων Κρεοφύλου λαβὼν, πρῶτος διεκόμισεν εἰς Πελοπόννησον.

‡ *Λυκούργος* ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἀερόαν πρῶτος εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐκέμισε τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν.—V. II. xiii. 14.

§ Ἐκεῖ δὲ καὶ τοῖς Ὀμήρου ποιήμασι ἐντυχὼν πρῶτον, ὡς ἔοικε, παρὰ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τοῖς Κλεοφύλου (sic) διατηρουμένοις, καὶ — ἐγράψατο προθύμως, καὶ συνήγαγεν ὡς δεῦρο κομιῶν ἦν γάρ τις ἤδη δέξαται τῶν ἐπῶν ἀμαυρὰ παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν. ἐκέκτηντο δὲ οὐ πολλοὶ μέρη τινὰ σποράδην τῆς ποιήσεως ὡς ἔτυχε διαφερομένης. γνωρίμην δὲ αὐτὴν μάλιστα καὶ πρῶτος ἐποίησε Λυκούργος.—Vit. Lycurgi.



the story in his usual manner : “ ‘There (in Asia) Lycurgus first fell in with the poems of Homer, probably in the keeping of the descendants of Cleophylus ; he *wrote* them out eagerly, and collected them together for the purpose of bringing them hither into Greece ; for there was already at that time an obscure rumour of these verses amongst the Greeks, but a few only possessed some scattered fragments of this poetry, which was circulated in a chance manner. Lycurgus had the principal hand in making it known.” This Cleophylus or Cleophylus, a Samian, is said to have been Homer’s host in Samos, and a poet himself.\* The nucleus of fact in this story may probably consist in this ;—that Lycurgus became better acquainted with the Homeric verses amongst the Ionian rhapsodes, and succeeded in introducing, by means of his own or others’ memory, some connected portions of them into western Greece. That he *wrote* them all out is, as we may see, so far as the original authority goes, due to the ingenious biographer alone.

From the time of Lycurgus to that of Solon, we hear nothing further of Homer, except that detached rhapsodies of the Homeric poetry were publicly recited at Athens, without any connection with each other, or any reference to a whole. Amongst these rhapsodies, the *Διπαι*, or Embassy to Achilles ; the *Ἀγῶν ἐπιτάφιος*, or Funeral Games ; the *Ὀπλοποιία*, or the Arms of Achilles ; the *Νίπτρα*, or Euryclea’s washing the feet of Ulysses ; the *Μνηστροφορία*, or Slaughter of the Suitors ; the *Νεκρομαντεία*, or Intercourse of Ulysses with the Dead ; *τὰ ἐν Πύλῳ*, or *τὰ ἐν Λακεδαιμόνι*, the Visits of Telemachus to Nestor and Menelaus, and many others, were popular, and were separately repeated by the

\* The Capture of Œchalia (*Οἰχαλία* ; *Ἀλωσις*), one of the earliest poems in the heroic cyclus, was attributed to this Cleophylus ; and the story is, that the plan of the work was given to him by Homer himself.

rhapsodes, as their own taste, or the inclination of the people, induced a preference. There is no mention of any such poems as the Iliad or Odyssey. Solon, a true poet himself, found the matter in this state, and was the first to direct that the pieces recited should follow one another in a narrative series, not the end of the action before the beginning, as had previously been common; and he seems in this manner to have effected a *ῥαφή*, or *ῥήμους*, that is, an arrangement of the rhapsodies, in something of an epic order. It is difficult to understand the great merit of Solon in this achievement, if, at the very time, he and the rhapsodes had a common written copy of the Iliad and Odyssey in their possession. Indeed, had the present form of these two poems been familiar to the people, or even to the reciters themselves, is it credible that such a garbling of the narrative would have been offered or borne? Whatever it was that Solon effected, it seems to have fallen far short of producing a perfect copy of the Homeric poems; for, if any credit can be attached to a cloud of authorities, the first construction, or reconstruction, or complete edition (call it what we may) of the Iliad and Odyssey, is due to Pisistratus. "Who," says Cicero,\* "was more learned in that age, or whose eloquence is said to have been more accomplished by literature than that of Pisistratus, who is said first to have *disposed* (*disposuisse*) the books of Homer, which were before confused, in the order in which we now have them?" Pausaniast—"*Pisistratus collected* (*ῥηροίξετο*) the verses of Homer, which were dispersed and retained in different places by memory." Josephus†—"They say that even Homer did not leave his poetry in writing; but that being preserved by tradition, it was subsequently *put together* (*συντεθεῖναι*) from the separate songs or rhapsodies;"

\* De Orat. Lib. III. 34.

† Lib. VII. 26. p. 594.

‡ Cont. Apion. I. c. 2.

meaning, apparently, by Pisistratus. Ælian\*—“Afterwards Pisistratus, having collected the verses, *set out or exhibited* (ἀπέφηνε) the Iliad and Odyssey.” Libanius†—“We praise Pisistratus for his *collection* (συλλογῆς) of the verses made by Homer.” Suidas‡—“Afterwards this poetry was *put together and in order* (συντέθη καὶ συνετάχθη) by many persons, and in particular by Pisistratus.” Eustathius§—“The poetry of the Iliad is one continuous body throughout, and well fitted together; but they who *put it together* (οἱ συνθέμενοι), under the direction, as it is said, of Pisistratus,” &c. An anonymous author in Allatius||—“Pisistratus, the Athenian, *arranged in order* (συνέταξε) his (Homer’s) genuine poems, which had been previously sung in a scattered state;” and Leo Allatius quotes the following epigram, which, he says, was inscribed on a statue of Pisistratus, at Athens:—

τρίς με τυραννήσαντα ποσαντάκις ἐξεδίωξε  
 ὄημος Ἐρεχθιδῶν, καὶ τρίς ἐπεσπάσατο,  
 τὸν μέγαν ἐν βουλαῖς Πεισίστρατον· ὅς τὸν Ὀμηρον  
 ἥθροισα, σποράδην τὸ πρὶν αἰδόμενον.  
 ἡμέτερος γὰρ—κ. τ. λ.

A scholiast¶—“It is said that the poems of Homer *were collected or tacked together* (συνεῳζάφησαν) by Pisis-tratus, and that those verses which were before read in a dispersed and desultory order, *were put in series* (συντέθησαν), their collocation having been disjointed by time.” Another scholiast\*\* says—“The poems of Homer, as such, were lost, as is said; for in those early times they were not committed to writing, but to *recitation alone* (μόνη διδασκαλία), as an instrument of memory.” And there is much more testimony to the prevalent opinion

\* V. H. xiii. 14.

† V. Ὀμηρος.

‡ Wolf, *ibid.*

\*\* Wolf, s. 18.

† Pan. in Jul. tom. i. p. 170. Reiske.

§ Wolf, Proleg. 33. n.

¶ Wolf, *ibid.*

of the ancients on this point, which it is unnecessary to adduce.

That this collection was made with the assistance, and probably by the principal operation, of the contemporary poets, was also generally believed. Pausanias, in speaking of v. 573, in the second book of the *Iliad*, says—"That Pisistratus, or some one of his associates (*ἢ τὸν τινα ἐταίρων*), had changed the name through ignorance." A scholiast quoted before, after saying that Pisistratus was anxious that the poetry of Homer *should be preserved in writing* (*ἐγγράφον διαφυλάττεσθαι*), and relating the way in which he collected, from all quarters, the remains of the poet, adds, that he *delivered the whole to certain learned and intelligent men* (*παρέδωκεν ἀνθρώποις σοφοῖς καὶ ἐπιστήμοσιν*). The passage from Suidas has been cited before; and the long fable of a Septuagint of *διασκευασταί*, set in motion by Pisistratus, as told in the words of a certain Diomedes published by Allatius and Villoison,\* is not without moment, as evidencing the prevalence of the same story throughout the critical schools. The great poets with whom Pisistratus lived in friendship, and of whose aid he is supposed to have availed himself on this occasion, were Orpheus of Crotona, said to be the author of the *Argonautics*, Onomacritus the Athenian, Simonides, and Anacreon.

In the dialogue called *Hipparchus*, † attributed to Plato, it is said, indeed, of the younger son of Pisistratus of that name, "that he executed many other excellent works; and particularly *he first brought the verses of Homer into this country* (*τὰ Ομήρου πρῶτος ἐνόμισεν εἰς τὴν γῆν ταυτηνὴν*), and compelled the rhapsodes at the Panathenaic festival to go through them all in order, one taking up the other, in the same manner as they do now." If these words are to be taken strictly to mean

\* Wolf, s. 33.

† Plat. *Hipparch.*

that the Homeric poetry was not known at Athens before the time of Hipparchus, it is clear that they are grossly erroneous; but if they refer to the great work of arranging the Iliad and Odyssey, of which I have been speaking, there does not seem any material inconsistency in the statements. They may very reasonably be reconciled, by supposing that this great task of collecting and arranging the scattered verses of the Homeric rhapsodes, to which testimony is borne on all hands, was begun in an imperfect manner by Solon, principally executed by Pisistratus and his friends,\* and that Hipparchus, the accomplished son of the illustrious tyrant, was actively concerned in, and, perhaps, lived to finish, the work. This will embrace about eighty years from the date of Solon's law, B. C. 594, to the death of Hipparchus, B. C. 513. And, indeed, with regard to this dialogue, it is to be remembered that the praise of Hipparchus is its specific theme or object, and therefore more may be expected to be attributed to him in it than really belonged to him; but, in fact, the dialogue itself is none of Plato's.

If we could tell with certainty what operation it was that the ancient critics meant by their term, *διασκευάζειν τὴν τοῦ Ὁμήρου ποίησιν*, we might advance much further in this controversy than we have much likelihood of doing now. The Diasceuast was different from the Critic; the latter—such as Zenodotus or Aristarchus—confined himself to the judgment (*κρίσις*) of the genuine text of the author: he might condemn, or choose between conflicting readings; but he never pretended to add a verse, or a single word, as of his own. It is clear, however, that the ancients attributed to the Dias-

\* Yet the text remained very unsettled for ages after Pisistratus. The words, *Τρώεσσι δὲ κῆδὲ ἰφθίπται*, in the 15th line of the second book of the Iliad; were inserted after the time of Plato and Aristotle, who read instead, *δίδομεν δὲ οἱ εὖχος ἀρίσθαι*; by which words Jupiter was rendered guilty of falsehood.



ceuaſt a much wider range ; indeed, an action nearly akin to the freedom of compoſition itſelf. The word *διαſκευάſις* was found in a ſcholiaſt, before the publication of the famous Venetian ſcholia by Villoiſon ; but no precise ſenſe was affixed to the term. In the Venetian ſcholia, the *διαſκευαſται* of Homer are frequently mentioned, and paſſages are pointed out, which the *Critics* condemned as the interpolations of the *Diaſceuaſts*, the two characters being almoſt placed in direct oppoſition to one another. They have ſometimes been called Editors ; but yet they evidently did more than a modern editor may do with a book, to which, indeed, he only ſtands in the relation of a critical publisher. Wolf comes to a concluſion, that the word was uſed, by the old critics, in a ſenſe analogous to the *ἀναδιδάſκειν* of the dramatic poets ; that is, to commit a play to the ſtage a ſecond time, but recast, and improved by changes, additions, omiſſions, and more elaborate poliſhing.

It muſt be remembered, that, although the

Rhapsodes.

Homeric rhapsodies were undoubtedly committed to writing, and reduced into a certain form and order of compoſition, in the age of the Piſiſtradae, the ancient and national practice of recitation ſtill continued in honour, and for a conſiderable time afterwards was, perhaps, the chief mode by which thoſe poems were popularly known. Yet the well-known ſtory of Alcibiades and the ſchoolmaſter will ſhow that, in the age of the Peloponneſian war, written copies of parts, at leaſt, of the *Iliad*, were commonly to be found in places of education for the young. He is ſaid to have ſtruck the ſchoolmaſter, who confeſſed that he had not a ſingle rhapsody of the *Iliad* in his poſſeſſion. Plutarch calls it *βιβλίον Ὀμηρικόν*, evidently meaning a *part* of the poetry of Homer, as if, even in the time of Alcibiades, the old fragmentary form of the rhapsodies had not been entirely loſt in common uſe. And it may readily be



believed, that in proportion as written copies became multiplied, a taste for reading generated, and a literature, in the narrow sense of the word, created, this practice of publicly reciting national poetry, which was as congenial, as it was indispensable, to a primitive and unlettered people, would gradually sink in estimation, become degraded in character, and finally fall into complete disuse. This we find to have been precisely the case from about the year B. C. 430, till the age of the Alexandrian Critics, under the polite and civilized government of the Ptolemies. The old manner of reciting was, no doubt, very histrionic; but after the formation of a regular theatre, and the composition of formal dramas, in the time of Æschylus, the heroic verses of the Homeric age must have seemed very unfit vehicles of, or accompaniments to, scenic effect of any kind. In this interval, therefore, I place a third and last race of rhapsodes, now no longer the fellow poets and congenial interpreters of their originals, but, in general, a low and ignorant sort of men, who were acceptable only to the meanest of the people. Xenophon\* and Plato† bear abundant testimony to the contempt with which they were regarded, though the object of the latter in the *Ion* or *Ionian* was probably to sketch a true and exalted picture of the duty and the character of a genuine rhapsode.

With the frequency of written copies, a more accurate study of the Homeric poetry was introduced. It did not at first take the direction of verbal criticism, or the formation of a perfect text; but was occupied in suggesting and resolving difficulties in the theology, morals, manners, or supposed philosophy of the poet. The sophists, Prodicus, Protagoras, and Hippias the Elean, are commemorated as amongst the most distinguished interpreters of Homer in this line; and the ἀρχαῖοι

\* Sympos. 3.

† *Ion*, passim.

Ὀμηρικοί, mentioned by Aristotle,\* are rightly understood to refer to the commentators on, and not the imitators of, the Homeric poetry. The *προεζήματα*. *ζητήματα*, *ἀπορίαι*, and *λύσεις*, of these learned men, led the way to technical criticism and the task of editing the Homeric text itself. Antimachus, a very celebrated poet of Colophon, and contemporary with Socrates, is the first person recorded, after the age of the Pisistratidæ, as having devoted himself to the preparation of a complete copy, or *διόρθωσις*, of the Homeric poems. The next was Aristotle, whose copy of the *Iliad* (for he did not correct the *Odyssey*) was revised, as it is said, by Alexander himself, with the help of Callisthenes, and deposited in a very precious casket, taken amongst the spoils of the camp of Darius. This copy was called *ἡ ἐκ τοῦ νάρθηκος*. Besides these, there were six other copies of the Homeric poems, which had acquired general notoriety before the age of Zenodotus, but which were not attributed to the care of any individual in particular. These were, the Massiliotic or Marseilles copy, the Chian, Argive, Sinopic, Cyprian, and Cretan. The latter were denominated, in the Alexandrian schools, *αἱ πολιτικάι*, or *αἱ κατὰ πόλεις*, or *αἱ ἐκ πόλεων*, to distinguish them from the copies attributable to any known critic, which were called *αἱ κατ' ἄνδρα*. There were also many individuals who have become immortal by contributing an amended word, or even a corrected accent. Nessus of Chios is known for one observation on the word *καρός*, v. 378, 9th *Iliad*; Æschrio, for helping the word *λῆς*, v. 239, 11th *Iliad*, to a circumflex; and Lysanias of Cyrene, and Telephus the father of Philetas, are remembered for benefactions to a similar amount. Philetas himself, the elegiac poet, was more liberal and useful; and to his zeal and research we may, perhaps, attribute the devotion and learning of his pupil Zenodotus.

\* *Metaphys.* XII.

The whole face of Greek literature and Greek politics gradually changed after the Macedonian supremacy. The partition of the conquests of Alexander into great kingdoms, and the peaceful prosperity of Egypt, in particular, under the Ptolemies, threw the cities and manners of old Greece into comparative insignificance, and tended to give to the Greeks, what they had never before had, the benefits of something like a central government. Alexandria, second only to Constantinople in the advantages of its situation, quickly became the resort of learned men. The princes of the first dynasty spared neither expense nor pains in enriching the library which they had founded, and in attaching to it the services of the most illustrious poets and scholars of the day. The names of Philetas, Theocritus, Lycophron, Callimachus, Rhianus, Apollonius Rhodius, are more than enough to shed perpetual lustre upon the skilful and fostering patronage of the court of Alexandria. Criticism, being now provided with materials never before collected into one spot, sprang up in full vigour; and the first subject upon which it tried its powers was the Homeric, or old national, poetry of Greece. None stood more in need of critical care, nor was any other likely to repay the labour so well. The four great critics, to whose exertions we owe the Homer we now have, were Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium, Aristarchus, and Crates. The first of these was a native of Ephesus, and lived at Alexandria under Ptolemy II. Philadelphus, and may be fixed about B. C. 284. His character and merits as an editor or διορθωτής of Homer have been handed down to us in a very conflicting manner. Ausonius gives him high praise in the well-known couplet:—

Mæonio qualem cultum quæsit Homero  
Censor Aristarchus normaue Zenodoti.

*Lud. Sapient. VII.*

And in another place, after mentioning among the critics, Varro, Crates, and Aristarchus, Ausonius adds—

Quique sacri lacerum collegit corpus Homeri;

by which, as Pisistratus seems to be out of the question, Wolf makes no doubt that Zenodotus is intended. Were we to judge of the value of Zenodotus by the majority of the readings and alterations attributed to him in the scholiasts, we could not rate him very highly. He seems to have exceeded all bounds in the liberties he took with the text, especially by omitting, as well as branding, a great number of passages which are now among the most admirable in the poems. Still, there are numerous corrections imputed to Zenodotus, which were afterwards approved by Aristarchus; and, as an excuse for his license, we may reasonably imagine that the varieties of the different copies of Homer, which he had collected, induced him to believe that he was not outgoing the limits drawn by previous editors, and which the conflicting texts seemed to require. Aristophanes of Byzantium was a disciple of Zenodotus, and was in great reputation during the reigns of Ptolemy IV. Philopater, and Ptolemy V. Epiphanes. He invented the accentual marks, and also the marks of punctuation, *προσῳδαίαι*, or *τόνοι* and *στροφαί*, and was a man of almost universal grasp in literature. He particularly directed his attention to the question of the genuineness of the old poetry, commonly attributed to the celebrated poets of antiquity, and seems to have been the first to brand as spurious all the vulgar conclusion of the Odyssey, from v. 297 of the 23d book. He also denounced the Hesiodic Shield of Hercules. He was a laborious commentator on Hesiod, Alcæus, Plato, and his namesake, the great comic poet, and arranged the Epinician Hymns of Pindar in the order in which we now have them. He appears to have taken less liberty than Zenodotus in

omitting verses from the text; but letting them stand, he marked such as he thought spurious. Such verses were ἡθετημένοι; the branding itself, an ἀθέτησις. Zenodotus had absolutely omitted, without notice (οὐδὲ ἐγγράφει), the passages which he considered spurious. It is to this Aristophanes that the celebrated Alexandrian canon, or classification of the Greek writers, is due. A part of the fame of Aristophanes consists in having been the master of Aristarchus, the acknowledged prince of the ancient criticism, and whose name has passed through the Latin into all modern languages as synonymous with the perfect critic.

This remarkable man was a native of Samothrace, and taught at Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy VI. Philometor, B.C. 180. Aristarchus was preceptor of the children of Philometor; but in the latter part of his life retired, or was banished, to Cyprus, in the reign of the barbarous monster Euergetes II. His fame as a grammarian and critic transcended that of all who had preceded him, and was spread by his numerous and ardent disciples throughout the civilized world. His sayings were regarded by them as oracular; and the critics of ages afterwards continued to revere his conclusions as peremptory. One scholiast says,—“Since this was the opinion of Aristarchus, we submit to him as being pre-eminently the best grammarian.” Another, in the true spirit of the *mallem errare cum Platone*, says,—“But it is better to assent to Aristarchus than to Hermapias, *although the latter may seem to be in the right* (εἰ καὶ δοκεῖ ἀληθεύειν).” Panætius, his contemporary, called him a prophet, or diviner (μάντιν, διὰ τὸ ξαδῶς αταμαντεύεσθαι τὰς τῶν ποιημάτων διανοίας.) Sextus Empiricus compared him to Plato; and the proverbial “Fiet Aristarchus” of Horace is remembered by all. He composed upwards of eight hundred grammatical or critical commentaries; and, besides Homer, he corrected and illustrated Archilochus, Alcæus, Anacreon,



Æschylus, Sophocles, Ion, Pindar, Aristophanes, Aratus, and some others. It is probably an authentic anecdote of this great and modest man, that, upon being asked why he, who could so unerringly detect and amend the faults of a Homer, did not himself compose a poem upon the true principles of criticism, as a model, he answered, "that he *could* not write as he *would*, nor *would* write as alone he *could*."

There were two editions (ἐκδόσεις) of the Homeric poems by Aristarchus: one published by himself, in which the Iliad and Odyssey were, for the first time, divided into twenty-four books each, denominated by the letters of the Greek alphabet; the other, apparently collected and published after his death. These are generally distinguished by the scholiasts as ἡ προέκδοσις and ἡ ἐπέκδοσις. Ammonius, the disciple and successor of Aristarchus in the Alexandrian school, wrote a treatise against the allowance of more than one Aristarchean text; but it is certainly very probable, that, in point of fact, the posthumous edition was made up of the notes and sayings of the great critic subsequent to his original publication. Like his master, Aristophanes, Aristarchus is, in general, represented as more moderate than Zenodotus in expunging verses from the text, although it is certain that very many lines—whole passages, indeed—were read in the copies existing before his time, which, having been omitted in his edition, are now entirely lost. Those verses which he did not obliterate, but considered suspicious and unworthy of Homer, he marked with an obelus (†) or spit; whence the grammatical term, ὀβελίζειν, *to obelize*, or condemn, is derived. Ausonius alludes to this practice in the line—

Quique notas spuriis versibus imposuit.—Ep. xviii. 29.

And Seneca says, with some spleen—"Aristarchi notas,



quibus *aliena* carmina compunxit, recognoscant?" In the Anthology, this famous school of grammarians is abused without mercy, as Γραμματικοὶ Μώμου τέκνα—Ζηνοδότου σκύλακες—οἱ περὶ Καλλιμάχου, οἱ τ' ἀπ' Ἀριστάρχου σῆτες ἀκανθολόγοι—Ἀριστάρχειοι

γωνιοβόμυκες, μονοσύλλαβοι, οἷσι μέμηλε  
τὸ Σφιν, τὸ Σφῶϊν, καὶ τὸ Μῖν, ἡδὲ τὸ Νῖν.

These sarcasms point at a very minute spirit of word-catching,—a term invented by those who have never considered the indispensable importance of verbal criticism; but the bantering reproach of Cicero,\* that Aristarchus denied those verses, which he disapproved, to be Homer's, indicates, no doubt, the principle upon which that great critic, like all before him, thought himself bound to correct the text of Homer: for it is deserving of serious attention that, although editions of Pindar, and the dramatic authors, and many others, proceeded from the schools of Zenodotus, Aristophanes, and Aristarchus, we never hear of any charge of licentious interference with the text of those and similar poets, whose works were committed to writing by the authors themselves: it is only when the Alexandrian critic had to do with the remains of the old ἀοιδοί, or minstrel bards, that they seem to have assumed a wider range of action, and to have consulted their own sense of what was worthy of Homer, in selecting a uniform text out of the numerous and discrepant copies before them. The critic (ὁ κριτικός) of that day was endowed with a prerogative much beyond any now legitimately belonging to the office. He was not only above the γραμματιστής, whose peculiar province it was to divide works into convenient parts, to draw up summaries or arguments, to compare manuscripts, remove clerical

\* Ep. ad Fam. III. 11.

errors, and correct the punctuation and accentual marks ; but also above the γραμματικὸς, the interpreter of the meaning of words and sentences, the commentator, as we should call him. The Critic, or Judge, might be both these, but he must also have been something more : he claimed a right of inquiring into the genuineness of the text of the ancient authors ; of assigning to each name of high antiquity what properly belonged to it ; and of pronouncing to the audience in the school, what parts were and what were not agreeable to the fixed laws of just composition. It was this exalted duty, which the supposed Longinus calls ἡ τῶν λόγων κρίσις, the judgment of literary works ; and he declares the faculty to be the last, and consummate, birth or result from much experience (πολλῆς πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγένημα). Those who would either do justice to the men, to whom we are probably indebted for the preservation of any Homer at all, or who would obtain any historical knowledge of the character of the present text of the Iliad and Odyssey, ought certainly to bear in mind the true nature and circumstances of the ancient criticism of the Alexandrian school ; from which source alone, it must be remembered, almost all our remains of the Greek literature have come : for it is the conclusion of Wolf, Villoison, and of modern scholars in general, that the text, or παράδοσις, of Aristarchus finally prevailed as *Homer* amongst the ancients, and especially the Romans ; the greater part of the scholia are apparently compiled from his critical annotations, and all succeeding commentators seem to have assumed the Aristarchean edition as the basis for their labours. During the lapse of four or five centuries, a vast accumulation of critical matter had taken place. Crates of Malles, a contemporary with Aristarchus, was his bitter opponent. He opened a school of grammar and criticism at Pergamus, under Attalus II. Philadelphus, by whom he was sent on an embassy to Rome, B. C. 167, and

was the first and most distinguished introducer of Greek language and literature into that city. He had a great reputation in his own time; though, as far as can be judged by what remains of his criticisms on Homer, without much merit. The main point of controversy between these masters of the Alexandrian and Pergamenian schools turned upon the question of allegorizing the poetical machinery of Homer,—Aristarchus wisely discountenancing the idle ingenuity of Crates, who embraced all the physical interpretations of the old Stoics; and, not content with making the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the best poems, would also have them to be the best treatises on astronomy, medicine, and a dozen arts and sciences beside, in the world. The animosity of the Crateteans would naturally examine the readings and omissions of Aristarchus with severity; and many of their objections, which have ultimately prevailed, are preserved by the scholiasts. In the third or fourth century after the Christian era, another recension of the Homeric text took place, when the edition of Aristarchus was corrected according to the subsequent authorities; and it is from this edition that all the MSS. of original authority are generally supposed to be derived.

But to return to the principal subject of this discussion,—it being quite clear that the *Iliad* Summary. assumed substantially its present shape in the age of PISAISTRATUS, there are three distinct points of view in which this collection may be placed:—1. That Homer wrote the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in their present form; that, by means of the desultory recitations of parts only by the itinerant rhapsodes, this original unity of form was lost in western Greece; and that PISAISTRATUS and his son did no more than collect all these parts, and re-arrange them in their primitive order;—2. That Homer wrote the existing verses, constituting the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in such short songs or rhapsodies, as he

himself, an itinerant rhapsode, could sing or recite separately; and that these songs were *for the first time* put into one body, and disposed in their epic form, by Pisistratus, as aforesaid;—3. That certain nuclei, or continuous portions of each poem, were the work of one or more principal bards; that these poems, founded on some particular events, or descriptive of the prowess of some particular heroes, of the Trojan cyclis, were interpolated with episodes by other subordinate poets; that recitation very soon compacted the verses of both into several large masses, such as the third great battle, from the eleventh Iliad to the death of Patroclus, and from the return of Achilles to the death of Hector; or the narrative of Ulysses at the court of Alcinous, the residence with Eumelus, and the intercourse with, and the destruction of, the Suitors; and that the portions of the cycle so reduced into form, and rendered popular by their superior merit, were the materials out of which, with the help of transposition and supplement, the Iliad and Odyssey, as poems, were compiled. The first of these is the common opinion everywhere, except in Germany; the second seems to have been Bentley's; the last is Vico's, Wolf's, and Heyne's. I have no intention of saying more on this curious controversy, than just to intimate to the student, that the degree of use and notoriety which alphabetical writing had obtained in Greece, in the probable age of the Homeric poems, has been the subject of much dispute; which, however, is almost exclusively raised upon the insufficient ground of some public inscriptions, the genuineness or antiquity of which has been as scornfully denied by some scholars as undoubtingly maintained by others. M. de Fortia d'Urban believes, in all sincerity, that a certain temple exists entire in the present day at Amyclæ, in Laconia; which temple, with its still legible inscription, was the work of Eurotas, third king of the Lacedæmonians of the dynasty which reigned before the original conquest

by the Heraclidæ, in the year B. C. 1522.\* And yet, nearly one thousand years later, the Athenian Solon had arrived at nothing beyond a βουστροφηδόν sculpture on stone for the publication of his laws! The fact is, the high antiquity ascribed to some of these inscriptions by the French scholars is quite idle, and has been well refuted in Mr. Rose's excellent work on the Greek Inscriptions. At the same time, we ought to take into account the apparent familiarity of Homer with the Sidonian artisans; the long and strict alliance between the Sidonians and the Jews; and the indisputable possession and use of writing materials, of some sort or other, by the Hebrew people, before any of the probable dates of the Trojan war.

I cannot conclude this slight notice of the history of the preservation of the Iliad and Odyssey, and of the different opinions which have been expressed as to the origin of those poems, without warmly recommending to the student the very careful perusal of Wolf's profound and ingenious Prolegomena, not only as containing a complete account of almost all that can be now discovered with respect to the Homeric poems, but also as exhibiting an incomparable sketch of the character, divisions, and stages of the ancient Criticism. It is impossible, also, not to admire the masterly Latinity of this famous essay. It is not very easy; but it is without the crabbed pedantry of the modern style of German criticism, and possesses, almost equally with the Latin of Milton, the masculine freedom and distinctness of an author's own native idiom. Heyne's Excursus, in his edition of Homer, are likewise extremely interesting, and full of various and useful information; and Mr. P. Knight's Prolegomena present a great deal of matter in a small space, and are particularly instructive upon the disputed point

Wolf,  
Heyne,  
Knight.

\* Homère et ses Ecrits, p. 23.

of writing. He adopts the opinion of the *χωρίζοντες* of the Alexandrian school, in separating the age and authorship of the two great poems, and is followed in that particular by Mr. Milman, who, like Mr. P. Knight, contends for two Homers at least, although he is, in other respects, opposed to the Wolfian theory.



TRANSLATION  
 OF THE  
 THIRD BOOK  
 OF  
 VICO'S SCIENZA NUOVA.

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ON THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUE HOMER.

By demonstrating, as I have done in the preceding book, that the wisdom of the old Greek poets was no more than the wisdom of the common people, and that those poets were first mythical, and afterwards heroic, I have implicitly shown the same position to be true in respect of the wisdom of Homer. Plato, however, pretends, on the contrary, that Homer possessed all the recondite knowledge of a civilized age; and he has been followed in this opinion by all the philosophers, and especially by Plutarch, who has devoted an entire book to this subject. This prejudice is so deeply rooted in men's minds, that it becomes necessary to inquire particularly whether, in fact, Homer has, in any instance, played the philosopher. Longinus had endeavoured to solve this problem in a work which Diogenes Laertius mentions in his life of Pyrrhon.

## CHAP. I.

*On the Philosophic Meaning attributed to Homer.*

I will grant at once, as is just, that Homer must have been expected to follow the common feelings, and consequently the common manners, of his yet barbarous contemporaries. Such feelings and such manners furnish poetry with appropriate materials. Let us pass over, therefore, the fact of his representing force as the measure of the greatness of the gods; let us leave Jupiter to demonstrate, by the strength with which he could lift the mighty fabulous chain, that he is the king of gods and men; let us leave Diomed, with the aid of Minerva, to wound Venus and Mars—the incident does not seem improbable in such a system as his; let us leave Minerva, in the battle of the gods, to rifle Venus, and to hurl a stone at Mars—by which, however, we may judge if she could be the goddess of wisdom in the popular belief; let us also pass over the poet's too faithfully recording the use of poisoned arrows in the instance of Ulysses, who goes expressly to Ephyre to find poisonous herbs for the purpose,\*—a practice, by the way, from which the writers on the law of nations would have us believe that the people of all countries have constantly abstained, whilst we here see it in force amongst the Greeks, to whom all the civilization of the world is attributed; and, finally, let us pass over the custom of not burying the bodies of their enemies slain in battle, but of leaving them as a prey to dogs and carrion birds. All this is intelligible; but the aim of

\* Od. A'. I. 259. B'. II. 328. Notwithstanding the evidence of the first of these passages, it is obvious that poisoned arrows are not represented as used in any part of the action of the Iliad or Odyssey. See the various instances of arrow wounds in the Iliad, inflicted on both sides.

poetry being to soften the ferocity of the common herd, over the minds of which poets exercise a sovereign influence, it was surely not the part of a wise man to inspire admiration for feelings and customs so barbarous, and to confirm the vulgar in their savage habits by the pleasure they would take in seeing them so well painted. It was surely not the part of a wise man to amuse a coarse nation with the coarseness of its gods and heroes. Mars, in his combat with Minerva, calls her *zuvvusia*, dog-fly ; Minerva gives Diana a blow with her fist ; Achilles and Agamemnon—one the first of heroes, and the other chief of the whole league—both kings, compliment each other with the epithet of *dog*, and, in fact, use language which could scarcely be endured towards servants on the stage.

How can we reckon as other than absurd the pretended wisdom of the general-in-chief, who requires to be forced by Achilles to restore Chryseis to her father, the priest of Apollo ; whilst, at the very time, that god, in order to avenge Chryseis, ravages the Greek army by a destructive pestilence ? And then this king, regarding himself as injured, imagines he shall repair his honour by executing a piece of justice quite worthy of the wisdom which he had previously exhibited. He takes Briseis from Achilles, in order, no doubt, that the hero who bore with him the destiny of Troy might be induced to retire from the army with his troops and vessels, and that Hector might butcher those whom the plague should spare ! Nevertheless, this is the poet who has hitherto been regarded as the founder of the civilization of the Greeks, and the author of the politeness of their manners. It is from the story which we have just seen that all the Iliad is derived : such a captain and such a hero are its principal actors. Verily, here is a poet incomparable in the conception of poetic characters ! Undoubtedly, Homer does merit such a praise, but it is in another sense, as we shall hereafter

see. His most sublime characters shock the feelings of a civilized age; but they are most appropriate and decorous in themselves, if you refer them to the heroic nature of the passionate and irritable men whom he intended to describe.

If Homer is a sage—a philosopher—what shall we say of the passion of his heroes for wine? Are they afflicted and grieving? their consolation is to get drunk, as the wise Ulysses does in particular. Scaliger is indignant at all those similes taken from the most savage images of a savage nature. We may admit, however, that Homer was forced to make such a selection, in order to be completely intelligible to the common people, who were at that time savage themselves; and yet, although his similes are certainly incomparable in themselves, they by no means indicate a spirit softened and civilized by philosophy. No one, upon whom philosophy had made any impression, would have indulged in those bloody details of wounds by which Homer, in a hundred extravagant ways, diversifies the pictures of slaughter which constitute the sublimity of the *Iliad*. The consistency which the study of philosophy gives and preserves, would never have feigned the gods and heroes of such fickle tempers—passing, in a moment, from the most violent grief to perfect calm—and in the midst of a furious passion, bursting into tears at the recollection of some domestic incident:—just as in the barbarous age of Italy, at the end of which Dante, the Tuscan Homer, whose poem is, in fact, historical, made his appearance, Cola di Rienzo, whose life exactly expresses the manners of the Homeric heroes, burst into tears, with his whole audience, whilst speaking concerning the oppressed state of his fellow-countrymen. Others, again, in deep distress, all at once forget their sorrow, and abandon themselves to joy upon the first agreeable amusement, as in the instance of the wise Ulysses at the feast of Alcinous; and some become irritated at a word spoken

without the slightest intention of giving offence, and even threaten death to the innocent speaker. Thus, Achilles receives in his tent the unfortunate Priam, who had come alone by night through the camp of the Greeks to ransom the body of Hector; he admits him to his table; and then, for a single expression which the grief for his son elicits from Priam, Achilles forgets the sacred laws of hospitality, the rights of a generous confidence, and the respect due to age and misfortune, and, in a transport of blind passion, menaces the old man with destruction. The same Achilles, in his impious obstinacy, refuses to forget, on behalf of his country, the outrage of Agamemnon; and at last only comes to the aid of the Greeks when defeated and perishing under the sword of Hector, because he thirsts to take vengeance on Paris for the death of Patroclus. Even in the grave he remembers the rape of Briseis, and the sacrifice of the beautiful and unhappy Polixena is demanded as an offering to his vindictive spirit.

I need not say how impossible it is to believe that a man, accustomed to reason, and to combine his thoughts philosophically, could ever have occupied himself in devising the old women's tales, fit only for children, with which Homer has stuffed his *Odyssey* full.

These savage and gross manners, therefore—these unreasonable, obstinate, and fickle characters—could have belonged to none but men, weak in reason as children, quick in imagination as women, and passionate as young men in the most boiling hour of youth. We must, upon such an exhibition, refuse to Homer any claim to philosophy. Hence arise the doubts which compel me to search more deeply for the true Homer.

## CHAP. II.

*Of the Country of Homer.*

Almost all the cities of Greece contended for the glory of having given birth to Homer. Some authors even make him an Italian, and Leo Allatius has troubled himself to no purpose to settle the point. If it is true that no writer exists more ancient than Homer, as Josephus maintains against Apion—if the writers upon the subject are all of a date long subsequent to the Homeric age—I must necessarily make use of my metaphysical criticism, and endeavour to discover in Homer himself both his age and his country, by considering him less as an author than as the founder of a nation. In fact, Homer has been popularly regarded as the founder of the Greek civilization. I have no doubt that the author of the *Odyssey* was born in the south-western parts of Greece. A remarkable passage justifies this conjecture. Alcinous, king of the isle of the Phæacians, which is now Corfu, offers to Ulysses a well equipped vessel to carry him back to his country; and he observes, that his people are so skilful in maritime affairs, that they could conduct him even as far as Eubœa, if necessary—which those whom accident had led thither, termed the most remote land, the Thule of the Greek world. The Homer of the *Odyssey*, who had such a notion of the island of Eubœa, was assuredly not the same as the Homer of the *Iliad*; for that island is not very distant from Troy and Asia Minor, where, beyond a doubt, the latter was born. Seneca himself says, that it was a celebrated question among the Greek grammarians—“whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were from the same author.” If the Greek cities disputed for the birth of Homer, it was because each recognized in the two poems its own words, phrases, and dialect.



This observation will help us in the discovery of the true Homer.

### CHAP. III.

#### *Of the Age of Homer.*

The age of Homer is pretty clearly indicated by the following remarks :—1. At the funeral of Patroclus, Achilles celebrates almost all the games in subsequent use at Olympia in the most refined period of Greece.—2. The arts of casting in low relief, and of engraving on metals, had been already invented, as is proved, amongst other things, by the Shield of Achilles. Painting was not yet invented,\* which is easily explained ; for casting removes some of the surface, leaving the rest in relief ; engraving does the same in a reverse order and degree ; but painting destroys the surface altogether, which is the most difficult effort of invention. Hence neither Homer, nor Moses, make any mention of painting ; a strong proof of their antiquity.—3. The delicious gardens of Alcinous, the magnificence of his palace, and the sumptuousness of his table, prove that the Greeks had already learned to admire luxury and pomp.—4. The Phœnicians had already introduced ivory, purple, and incense from Arabia (as in the description of the grotto of Venus in the *Odyssey*), byssus or fine linen, and rich robes. Amongst the presents made to Penelope by her suitors, we find a veil or mantle, the ingenious workmanship of which might do honour to modern times.—5. The carriage in which Priam goes to seek Achilles, is made of

\* Wolf, citing Pliny xxxv. 3, observes that the stained vessels and the dyed caparison of the Carian woman in the 4th *Iliad*. 141, do not prove the existence of painting, although they must have led the way to it.—Prol. xix.

cedar ; the grotto of Calypso is fragrant with it.—6. The voluptuous baths of Circe.—7. The young slaves of the suitors are described as beautiful, graceful, and fair-haired—such, precisely, as the fastidiousness of modern times requires for servants.—8. Men dress their hair as carefully as women,—a habit with which Hector and Diomed reproach Paris.—9. The Homeric heroes eat nothing but roast meat—the most simple mode of cookery, demanding a brasier only. This custom continued in sacrifices. The Romans called the flesh of victims roasted on the altar, and distributed amongst the guests, *prosficiæ* ; in course of time, victims, as well as common food, were roasted on spits. When Achilles receives Priam at his table, he himself opens the lamb and roasts it, prepares the table, and serves the bread in baskets ; for, in fact, the feast of an Homeric hero was a sacrifice at which he officiated as priest himself. Agamemnon himself slays the two lambs, the blood of which was to sanction the treaty made with Priam—so much solemnity was then attached to an act which now belongs to a butcher only ! Boiled meat came into use afterwards—it requiring, besides fire, water, a caldron, and a tripod or stand.\* Virgil gives his heroes boiled meat, and makes them roast their meat with spits. Last of all came seasoned meats. The most delicate morsel anywhere actually eaten in Homer, is a cake or fritter made of flour, cheese or curd, and honey ; but in two of his similes he mentions fish ; and Ulysses tells one of the suitors, of whom he begs alms, that the gods give to hospitable kings waters abounding in fish, which constitute the greatest luxury of festivals.†—10. Finally, which is very important to our

\* Yet the caldron and the tripod are familiar articles of furniture in the Iliad.

† Yet in the 4th book of the Odyssey, Menelaus seems to represent the being reduced to eat fish as an instance of great privation.

purpose, Homer seems to have lived in an age when the strict heroic or feudal right had fallen into disuse in Greece, and popular liberty had begun to appear; for his heroes contract marriage with foreign women, and bastards succeed to their fathers' thrones; which is just what we might expect; for, long before, Hercules had been stained with the blood of the brute Centaur Nessus, and had died mad; which means, as I have before shown, that the heroic or feudal right had expired.

From all these authorities, selected chiefly from the *Odyssey*, which Longinus supposes to have been the work of Homer's old age, I incline to the opinion of those who place the age of Homer a very long time after the Trojan war—perhaps four centuries and a half—so as to make him contemporary with Numa. Indeed, I might bring him down lower; for Homer speaks of Egypt, and it is said that Psammetichus, who reigned after Numa, was the first king of Egypt who opened that country to the Greeks: but a crowd of passages in the *Odyssey* will show that Greece had been a long time open to the Phœnicians, whose news as well as merchandise were equally popular with the Greeks, pretty much as everything from India is with us now. Hence we might believe, perhaps, that Homer never saw Egypt, and that all he says about that country and Libya, Phœnicia, Asia in general, Italy, and Sicily, was founded on the reports of the Phœnicians. But it is not so easy to reconcile the delicacy and luxury of life occasionally visible in his poems, with the fierce and barbarous manners of his heroes in general, but especially in the *Iliad*; and really, in the impossibility of reconciling this discrepancy—"ne placidis cocant immitia,"—I am tempted to believe that the two poems were elaborated and continued by several authors during many successive ages. So we advance a step further in our search after the true Homer.

## CHAP. IV.

*Of the incomparable Genius of Homer for Heroic Poetry.*

That absence of all philosophy which I have remarked in Homer, and my discoveries as to his country and age, induce a strong suspicion that he was, in fact, one of the common class of mankind. In support of which suspicion these two observations may be made:—

1. Horace\* considers it almost impossible to imagine new heroic characters after Homer, and he recommends all tragic poets to borrow them ready made from the *Iliad*. It was not so with Comedy: the characters of the New Comedy at Athens were all conceived by the contemporary poets, who were forbidden by law to represent real individuals; and these characters were conceived with so much felicity, that the Romans, notwithstanding their national pride, admitted the superiority of the Greeks in comedy.†

2. Homer, who came so long before the philosophers, the critics, and the authors of treatises *de arte poetica*, was, and still remains, the sublimest of poets, in the most sublime kind of poetry, that is, the heroic; and tragedy, which arose subsequently, was, as every one knows, altogether gross and coarse in its commencement.

The first of these difficulties ought to have been enough to excite the researches of the Scaligers, the Patrizios, the Castelvetro, and others, in discovering the reason of this difference. That reason can only be found in the origin of poetry; and, consequently, in the invention of those poetic characters which constitute the whole essence of poetry.

1. The Ancient Comedy introduced living characters

\* Epist. ad Pis. 128.

† Ibid. 268.

on the stage, just as they were, without disguise; and thus Aristophanes made use of Socrates, and thereby prepared the ruin of the most virtuous of the Greeks.\* The New Comedy painted the manners of a civilized age, the philosophers of which had already made those manners the subject of their study on the Socratic plan. Menander and his colleagues, enlightened by the maxims in which the Socratic philosophy had condensed all morality, were enabled to form ideal characters, well adapted to catch the attention of the vulgar, which is always teachable by example, but incapable of profiting by precept.

2. Tragedy, on the contrary, having a different object, brings upon the stage the hatred, the fury, the resentment, and the vengeance of heroes,—all of them passions of sublime natures. The sentiments, the language, the actions, which are appropriate to such passions, have something of their very violence and atrocity; and all these circumstances are in the highest degree consistent with each other, and uniform in their subjects. Now, these passionate pictures were never realized with more effect than by and in the Greeks of the heroic age, at the end of which Homer came: and Aristotle says with reason, in his *Poetics*, that Homer is a unique poet in respect of his invention. The reason is, that these poetic characters, the incomparable truth of which was so much admired by Horace, were representations of certain fixed classes of the imagination. To each of these characters, the Greeks attached all the qualities which could belong to the genus of which it was considered the representative. With the character of Achilles—the principal subject of the *Iliad*

\* Vico applies a very strong term of reproach to Aristophanes; but the supposition that the representation of the “*Clouds*” had anything to do with the death of Socrates is probably a mistake.

—they associated all the qualities peculiar to heroic virtue; the feelings, the manners, the irritability, the implacable resentment, and the violence, which “*nihil non arrogat armis.*” In the character of Ulysses—the principal subject of the *Odyssey*—they found all the distinguishing traits of the heroic wisdom, the prudence, the patience, the dissimulation, the duplicity, the chicanery, the verbal truth, and the matter of fact lie. They attributed to these two cardinal characters all the particular actions, the celebrity of which was sufficient to induce a still uncultivated people to range them under one class or the other. These two great characters, the creations of an entire nation, could not but present in their conception a happy uniformity; it is in this intrinsic uniformity, harmonizing with the common feeling of a whole nation, that the grace and beauty of a fable consists. Conceived by such powerful imaginations, these heroic characters could not but be sublime. Hence we may deduce two eternal laws in poetry:—according to the first, the sublime ought always to have something of the popular in it; by the second, the people who first themselves created these heroic characters, could not help transferring to their civilized contemporaries, the qualities which had already been associated with their own standards of excellence.

## CHAP. V.

*Some Philosophical Observations which may contribute to the  
Discovery of the true Homer.*

1. Men are naturally inclined to consecrate the memory of those laws and institutions which form the foundation of the societies to which they respectively belong.

2. Hence History first arose, and then Poetry. His-



tory is the bare enunciation of the fact,—Poetry is the exaggerated imitation of it. Castelvetro saw this; but he did not profit by it to discover the true origin of poetry, for want of combining with it the following truth:—

3. That, it being a fact that poets preceded common historians, all primary history must have been poetical.

4. Fables were, in their origin, true narratives, and of a serious character. *Mûθος* has been defined *vera narratio*. In the commencement they were singular, and by degrees became inappropriate to their subjects, depraved, improbable, obscure, shocking, and finally incredible. Homer received his fables depraved and corrupted.

5. The poetic characters, which are the essence of the Fables or Mythi, owe their conception to the natural incapability of uncultivated men to abstract moral qualities from their subjects. Hence we find in these characters that mode of thinking which is imposed by nature on entire nations in the time of their profoundest barbarism. It is the characteristic of barbarians to aggrandize and extend their particular conceptions. A narrow mind, says Aristotle in his *Morals*, always makes a maxim, a general law, out of every separate deduction. The reason is, that the human mind, infinite in its own nature, being confined within the grossness of its senses, can only exert its almost divine faculties through the imagination. It is, perhaps, on that account, that, in the Greek and Latin poets, the images of the gods and heroes always appear above the human size; and that, in the barbarous pictures of the middle ages, we see the figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary of a colossal magnitude.

6. Reflection, not applied to its natural purpose, becomes the mother of Fiction. Barbarians have no reflection; and accordingly, the first heroic poets amongst the Romans celebrated actual events,—the

wars of Rome. When the barbarism of antiquity reappeared in the middle ages, the Latin poets of that age,—Gunterius, William of Apulia, &c.—adopted actual facts only for the subjects of their poems. The romancers of the same period affected to write true histories, and the Boiardos and Ariostos of an enlightened age took the materials of their poems from the chronicle of the Archbishop Turpin. It is from that defect of the habit of reflection, which renders uncultivated people incapable of abstract fiction, that Dante, profound in philosophical wisdom as he was, has represented, in his *Divine Comedy*, real personages and historical facts. He gave to his poem the title of *Comedy*, in the sense of the Ancient *Comedy* of the Greeks, in which real characters were represented. In this respect, Dante resembled the Homer of the *Iliad*, which, according to Longinus, is entirely dramatic, entirely in action; whilst the *Odyssey* is exclusively narrative. Petrarch, with all his learning, celebrated the second Punic war in a Latin poem; and his Italian works, the *Triumphs*, in which he takes the heroic tone, are nothing but a collection of stories. A striking proof that the primary fables were, in fact, histories, is, that *Satire* attacked not only real persons, but the persons best known; that *Tragedy* took for its subject the characters of the poetic history; and that the Ancient *Comedy* brought upon the stage celebrated men living at the time. But the New *Comedy*, the offspring of an age in which the Greeks were more capable of reflection, dealt in characters of pure fiction; and so, in modern Italy, the New *Comedy* did not reappear till the commencement of the 15th century. The Greeks and Latins never took an imaginary character for the principal subject of a tragedy. The modern public, agreeing in that respect with the ancient, requires the tragic opera to be founded on history; and if it permit subjects of mere fiction in comedy, it is because the

incidents are always such as may be supposed to have passed in private life, and therefore to be credible, although unknown.

7. According to this explanation of the poetic characters, the poetic allegories attached to them ought to be construed with reference to the history of the first ages of Greece.

8. Such history would naturally be preserved in the memory of the nation, upon the principle first mentioned in this chapter. These men of the primary ages, whom we may consider as representing the infancy of humanity, must have possessed, to a wonderful degree, the faculty of memory; and, no doubt, it was so ordained specially by Providence, for in the time of Homer, and for a good while afterwards, common writing had not yet been introduced. Men, who were at this epoch bodies without reflection, were all feeling for peculiarities of character, all imagination to seize and magnify them, all invention to refer them to the classes which the imagination had created, and, lastly, all memory to retain them. All these faculties appertain, indeed, to the mind, but they draw their origin and vigour from the body. Memory is synonymous in Latin with imagination; Terence so uses *memorable*; *comminisci* is to feign, and *commentum* is a lie. Memory recalls the objects; imagination imitates and alters their real form; genius, or the faculty of invention, gives them a new turn, and throws them into novel groups. Thus, Memory has been called the mother of the Muses.

9. Poets were, therefore, beyond a doubt, the first historians of nations. Those who, since Plato and Aristotle, have investigated the origin of poetry, might have easily seen that all the histories of pagan nations commence in fables.

10. It is impossible to be, at the same time, and in an equal degree, a sublime poet and metaphysician. Every examination of the nature of poetry proves this.

Metaphysics detach the mind from the senses ; the poetic faculty plunges and buries the spirit in them ; the first rises to the general, the last descends to the particular.

11. In poetry, art is useless without nature ; criticism may make cultivated minds, but not great ones ; delicacy is a talent for little things, and greatness of mind naturally disdains little things. Let us, therefore, excuse the low and coarse passages which occasionally are to be found in Homer.

12. For, in spite of these defects, Homer is the father and the prince of all sublime poets. Aristotle declares it to be impossible to rival the poetic fictions of Homer, and Horace says that his characters are inimitable ; two commendations which mean the same thing.

13. The indecorums and quaintnesses with which Homer may be reproached, were the natural result of the poverty of the language then in use. Greek then consisted entirely of images and comparisons ; there were no abstract terms by which the class and species of things might be defined ; it was such diction as necessity imposes upon entire nations. The heroic verse itself was a product of the same necessity.

14. In short, such fables, such a mode of thought, such manners, such diction and verse, were all equally heroic, were common to the people at large, and consequently to the individuals of which the people was composed.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Philological Observations to the same Purpose.*

1. I have already remarked, that all the ancient profane histories commence with fables ; that barbarous nations, without communication with the rest of the

world, like the old Germans and Americans, preserved the history of their earliest times in verse ; that the Roman history, in particular, was first written in verse ; and that, in the middle ages, that of Italy was so also, by the poets in Latin.

2. Manetho, high priest of Egypt, construed the hieroglyphical history of the earliest period of his nation into a sublime national theology ; the Greek philosophers gave a philosophical explanation of the fables which contained the history of the most ancient ages of Greece. I have taken a directly contrary course, and have stripped those fables of their mystic or philosophic sense, in order to restore to them their true historical sense.

3. In the *Odyssey*, when a person is praised for relating a story well, he is said to have related it like a singer or musician. These singers were, no doubt, the rhapsodes, men of the people, who knew each by heart some piece of Homer, and so preserved in their memories his verses, which were not written. They went separately from town to town, reciting the Homeric poetry at festivals and fairs.

4. According to etymology, the rhapsodes did no more than arrange the poetry which they picked up from amongst the people themselves. The word Homer presents an analogous etymology, ὁμοῦ—εἴρειν, to bind together. "Ὁμηρος is a surety, because the surety binds the debtor and creditor together. This etymology, applied to Homer as hitherto conceived, is as forced, as it is easy and appropriate to *my* Homer, who bound together and arranged the poetical fables.

5. The Pisistratidæ divided and disposed the poems of Homer into the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. By this we may understand that these poems were, previously, nothing but a confused mass of poetic legends. Besides which, remark the difference of style in the two poems. The same Pisistratidæ ordained, that, for the future, these

poems should be recited by the rhapsodes at the Panathenaic festival.

6. But the Pisistratidæ were expelled from Athens, a short time before the Tarquins were banished from Rome ; so that, in placing Homer in the time of Numa, the rhapsodes would have preserved these verses a long time by memory. What helps to prove that Homer was anterior to the use of writing is, that in no place does he make any mention of alphabetical characters. The letter of Prætus was by signs or symbols (σηματα).

7. Aristarchus corrected the poems of Homer ; and yet, without mentioning the crowd of licences in the versification, we still find in the variety of his dialects that discordant medley of heterogeneous expressions, which was, no doubt, the idioms of the different tribes of Greece.

8. Longinus, who could not deny the great diversity of style in the two poems, imagines that Homer composed the Iliad while still young, and the Odyssey in his old age. Certainly the resentment of Achilles appears a subject more fitting for a young man, and the adventures of Ulysses for an old one ; but how can we predicate these particulars of the life of a man, of the time and place of whose birth we know nothing ? Which ought to deprive Plutarch's Life of Homer of all credit, as well as that which is so frequently attributed to Herodotus ; a work full of minute details and amusing personal adventures.

9. Tradition declares that Homer was blind, and that his name is thence derived, according to the Ionic usage. Homer himself always represents as blind the poets who sing or recite at the tables of the great ; it is a blind man who appears at the feasts of Alcinous, and at those of the suitors of Penelope. Blind men have an astonishing force of memory. Lastly, according to the same tradition, Homer was poor, and went about the frequented parts of Greece reciting his poems.



## CHAP. VII.

*Discovery of the true Homer.*

I. The foregoing philosophical and philological observations induce me to believe that the fact is with Homer, as with the Trojan war, which furnishes to history a famous chronological epoch, but the reality of which some of the most sagacious critics dispute. Certainly, if there were no more traces of Homer than of the Trojan war, we could not, amidst so many difficulties, recognize in that name an individual man, but an ideal character only. But the two poems which have come down to us, will allow us to admit but one half of this position, and to say, that "Homer was the ideal or the heroic character of the Greek people, relating its own history in national poetry."

II. Every thing that is absurd and improbable in Homer as hitherto conceived, becomes appropriate, and even necessary, in the Homer as now proposed.

1. The uncertainty as to the country of Homer compels us to say, that if the people of Greece contended amongst themselves for the honour of having given birth to him, and all claimed him as citizen, it was because they were themselves "Homer." If there was such a diversity of opinion as to the time in which he lived, it was because he lived in the mouths and memories of the same people from the Trojan war to the reign of Numa, which is about 460 years.

2. The blindness and poverty of Homer were those of the rhapsodes, who, being blind (whence their Ionian name of ὁμηροί), had the more powerful memory. These rhapsodes were indigent persons, who gained their livelihood by reciting the Homeric poetry, of which they were the authors, in this sense—that they constituted

part of the people which had embodied its history therein.

3. In this manner, Homer composed the *Iliad* in his youth ; that is to say, in the infancy of Greece. She was then all burning with sublime passions, with pride, with resentment, and with revenge. These passions are opposed to dissimulation, but do not exclude generosity. Greece, therefore, in her infancy, would admire Achilles, the hero of force. Homer composed the *Odyssey* in his old age, when the passions of the Greeks began to be cooled by Reflection, the mother of Prudence. Then Greece would naturally admire Ulysses, the hero of Wisdom. In the youth of Homer, the pride of Agamemnon, the insolence and violence of Achilles, pleased the people of Greece. In his old age, they had begun to take pleasure in the delights of Calypso, the voluptuousness of Circe, the songs of the Sirens, and the sports of the lovers of Penelope. In fact, how is it possible to refer to the same age manners absolutely opposed to each other ? This difficulty struck Plato so forcibly, that, not knowing how otherwise to get rid of it, he imagines that, in the transports of poetic enthusiasm, Homer was enabled to foresee these effeminate and corrupt manners. But is not this to impute the very highest imprudence to one whom he represents as the author of the civilization of the Greeks ? To paint such manners—even if he condemned them—was it not to teach their imitation ? Let us rather admit that the author of the *Iliad* must have long preceded that of the *Odyssey* : that the first, a native of the north-east of Greece, sang the war of Troy, which was said to have taken place in his country ; and that the other, born in the south-west, celebrated Ulysses, who reigned in that quarter.

4. The individual character of Homer thus disappearing in a crowd of Greek tribes, the poet or the poetry becomes instantly justified from all the reproaches which

the critics have made on the score of the lowness of the thoughts, the grossness of the manners, the barbarism of the comparisons, the idioms, the licences in versification, and the discrepancy of dialects ; and, finally, for having elevated his men to gods, and degraded his gods to men. Longinus does not dare to defend the Homeric fables, except under colour of their being philosophical allegories ; which is as much as to say that, if taken in their primary sense, they could not impart to Homer the honour of founding the Greek civilization. But the truth is, that all these imperfections, which have been so much censured in the Homeric poetry, correspond to so many diversities of character amongst the Greeks themselves.

5. I assign to Homer the privilege of having alone possessed the faculty of inventing the poetical fictions of Aristotle, the heroic characters of Horace ; the privilege of an incomparable eloquence in his savage similes, in his terrible pictures of the dying and the dead in battle, in his sublime drawing of the passions ; and, finally, the merit of a style the most brilliant and picturesque imaginable. All these qualities belonged to the heroic age of Greece. It was the genius of that age which made Homer an unrivalled poet. In times when the memory and imagination were so full of force, and the power of invention was so great, Homer could not be a philosopher. And, accordingly, neither philosophy nor criticism, which arose subsequently, could ever once create a poet who even approached to Homer.

6. Thanks to this discovery, Homer is henceforth assured of those three immortal titles which have been given to him—of having been the founder of the civilization of Greece, the father of all the other poets, and the source of the different philosophies of his country. None of these titles could possibly belong to Homer, such as the world has hitherto imagined him. The vulgar Homer could not be regarded as the founder of the

Greek civilization ; because, from the epoch of Deucalion and Pyrrha, that civilization had been initiated by the institution of marriage. He could not be regarded as the father of poets ; because before him had flourished the theological poets, Orpheus, Amphion, Linus, and Musæus, to whom some chronologers added Hesiod. Nay, according to Cicero, there were many heroic poets before Homer ; and Eusebius names Philammon, Thamyris, Demodocus, Epimenides, Aristeas, and others. Finally, he could not be the source of Greek philosophy ; for the philosophers did not find their doctrines in the Homeric fables, but grafted them thereon. Homer only afforded to the philosophers an occasion of meditating on the highest truths of metaphysics and morals, and, in addition, gave a facility in illustrating them.

To the praises which I have just bestowed on Homer, let me add this—of having been the most ancient historian of paganism that has come down to us. His poems are two great treasure-houses, in which the manners of the first ages of Greece are preserved. But the lot of the Homeric poems has been similar to that of the laws of the Twelve Tables. On the one hand, the world has ascribed those laws to the Athenian legislator, from whom, it is said, they passed to Rome, whilst no one has seen in them the history of the common law of the heroic tribes of Latium ; on the other, the world has believed the poems of Homer to have been the work of the rare genius of an individual, instead of discovering in them the history of the common law of the heroic people of Greece.

## GREEK ALPHABET,

AND

## MATERIALS FOR WRITING.

A FEW words upon the gradual increase and ultimate completion of the Greek alphabet may be fitly introduced in this place, together with a short account of the various materials and instruments used, from the earliest times downwards, by the Greeks, for the purpose of writing. Some of these facts have an important bearing upon that part of the Wolfian theory which rests upon the improbability of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* having been committed to writing at the date of their composition.

According to the apparent inclination of Herodotus,\* the earliest authority for the common opinion, the Greeks had no written forms of letters before the arrival of the Phœnician Cadmus. This specific event, as well as the existence of Cadmus himself, is involved in the same thick mist of antehistoric antiquity, which conceals or disguises almost every thing or person, Greek or concerning Greece, antecedently to the Homeric æra. But chronologers must calculate a date, and several have been assigned to Cadmus. Newton places him B.C. 1045; the common system, B.C. 1493; and others, as M. Schoell, in his table, as far back as B.C. 1550. The Phœnician alphabet, thus introduced, is said to have consisted of eleven consonants—

\* Terps. 58–61.

B, Γ, Δ, K, Λ, M, N, Π, P, Σ, T,—

and four aspirates—

A, E, I, O,—

in all fifteen characters. The Phœnician alphabet, like the Hebrew, had no characters to express vowel sounds; but, instead of them, possessed the four above mentioned signs of different breathings. The Greeks, however, converted these four characters into vowel letters, and either from the Greeks, or through other channels from the East, they have passed into all languages properly called European. But this alphabet, however and whenever introduced, did not enable the Greeks to mark the difference of the long and the short E, or the long and the short O; neither could they by it express in writing the sounds of Υ or ΟΥ. For that purpose they made use of the letter O.

The next importation from the East is said to have been this letter Υ, which, it should seem, was at first employed by the Greeks to mark that strong aspirated consonant the modern French V. The name of the Ionian colony of Elia or Velia, in Lucania, is found upon some medals written thus—ΥΕΛΗ. Afterwards the Υ was softened down to the simple vowel sound of U. These are the sixteen letters which Pliny the Elder\* and Tacitus† represent as having been brought to Greece from Phœnicia by Cadmus.

The next accession to the Greek alphabet is said to have consisted of the letters Z, H, Θ. But H did not at first express the long vowel sound of the E, but simply the strong breathing,‡ which power it exclusively

\* Hist. Nat. vii. 56.

† Ann. xi. 14.

‡ Οἶμαι δὲ καὶ διὰ τοῦ Η στοιχείου τυπώσασθαι τοὺς παλαιούς τὴν δασυϊαν. Διόπερ καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι πρὸ πάντων τῶν δασυνομένων ὀνομάτων τὸ Η προγράφουσι.—*Athen.* ix. 398. Il literam non esse ostendimus, sed notam aspirationis, quam Græcorum antiquissimi similiter ut Latini, in versu scribebant.—*Priscian.* i. 28.



carried with it into the Latin, and has ever preserved in English and some other modern languages; it is thus found used in the celebrated Sigeian inscription of the sixth century B. C.; where *Ἑρμοκρατοῦς* is written **HEPMOKPATOS**.

After the H was appropriated to express the long E or η, the rough breathing was not indicated in writing at all till the time of Aristophanes of Byzantium, who divided the H, and made one half of it (Ι·) the mark of the aspirate, and the other half of it (ι) that of the lené. By degrees, these marks became — and —; and hence, in the cursive character, 'and'.

These nineteen characters are all which the Greeks are said to have borrowed from the Phœnicians. The other five letters are attributed to the Greeks themselves. According to Aristotle, the Φ and the X were invented by Epicharmus, the Sicilian father of comedy.

The remaining three letters, Ξ, Ψ, Ω, were, as it is believed, invented by Simonides the Younger, the son of Leoprepes, a little before the Persian wars; and he is also said to have first appropriated the Η to the expression of the long E as a vowel sound.

This complete alphabet of twenty-four letters was very commonly called the alphabet of Simonides. It was first adopted by the people of Samos, and subsequently by the Ionian colonies in general. Callistratus of Samos is said to have carried this complete alphabet to Athens, probably some time after its adoption by his own countrymen; but it is certain that it was not employed in any public inscriptions till the archonship of Euclides, B. C. 403. It was called the *Ἰωνικὰ γράμματα*, to distinguish it from the old Cadmeian letters, the figures of some of which were considerably rounded; and it was also called *ἡ μετ' Εὐκλείδην γραμματικὴ*, by way of opposition to the *Ἀττικὰ γράμματα*, the denomination by which the alphabet of twenty-one letters was known.

But the title of Cadmus to the invention, or rather introduction, of letters was not undisputed. Æschylus boldly ascribes it to his mythic Titan, if the ordinary interpretation of the words is correct:—

Καὶ μὴν ἀριθμὸν ἕξοχον σοφισμάτων  
ἕξεῦρον αὐτοῖς, γραμμάτων τε συνθέσεις,  
μνήμην θ' ἀπάντων μουσομήτορ' ἐργάνην.\*

And Euripides, in a remarkable fragment of his “Palamedes,” gives the invention to that hero, who is reckoned amongst the contemporaries of the Trojan war:—

Τὰ τῆς γε λήθης φάρμακ' ὀρθώσας μόνος  
ἄφωνα καὶ φωνοῦντα· συλλαβὰς τιθεῖς  
ἕξεῦρον ἀνθρώποισι γράμματ' εἰδέναι,  
ὥστ' οὐ παρόντα ποντίας ὑπὲρ πλακὸς  
τακεῖ κατ' οἴκους πάντ' ἐπίστασθαι καλῶς·  
παισὶν τ' ἀποθνήσκοντα χρημάτων μέτρον  
γράφοντα λείπειν, τὸν λαβόντα δ' εἰδέναι.  
ἂ δ' εἰς ἔριν πίπτουσιν ἀνθρώποις κακὰ  
δέλτος διαιρεῖ, κ' οὐκ ἔῃ ψευδοῇ λέγειν.

Another tradition attributes the Φ and the X only to Palamedes.

The reader will attach what faith he pleases to the lives and adventures of Cadmus, and Prometheus, and Palamedes; but of one thing there can be no doubt—that the Greek alphabet is essentially of Phœnician or Oriental origin. All that we know of the successive civilization of the nations of antiquity would, of itself, lead to this conclusion; and the earliest mode of writing in Greece, with which we are acquainted, seems strong evidence to confirm it: for as the Oriental writing was, and still is, in general, from right to left; so with the Greeks, originally, it should seem that the

\* Prom. Vinet, v. 459.

same practice prevailed, especially in inscriptions of a single line. Afterwards, but when, we cannot tell, the inscription began from the left; and when the writer arrived at the right extremity of the line, he returned in the next line from the right to the left with reversed letters, after the Eastern manner; and this mode of writing was called *βουστροφηδὸν γράφειν*—to trace the lines as oxen do in ploughing. The laws of Solon (B.C. 562) were first published in writing upon this plan; and so is the Sigeian inscription, which is probably still later. Sometimes the words were placed in a perpendicular line, one over the other, in the form of a column; and this was accordingly called *κιονηδὸν γράφειν*. But, ultimately, the Phœnician or Oriental method was entirely abandoned; and the more convenient practice of beginning every line horizontally from the left was universally adopted in its stead.

As instances of inscriptions of single lines, commencing from the right, I will mention two:—One the Inscriptio Burgoniana, on an amphora or vase, painted in a very antique manner. It was communicated by Mr. Burgon of Smyrna to Dr. Clarke. In common characters and order, this inscription runs thus:—

Τον Αθeneον αθλον εμι.\*

The other inscription was found by Colonel Leake on an iron helmet at Olympia:—

Κοιος μαποεσεν.†

It will be remembered that these two lines, and the alternate ones in the two following inscriptions, commence from the right, and that the letters themselves are in a reversed position; but, for the sake of con-

\* Rose, Inscript. p. 14.

Τῶν Ἀθηνέων (or Ἀθηνείων) ἄθλον εἰμί.

† Ibid. p. 20.

Κοῖος μ' ἐπόησεν, οἱ ἐποίησε.

venience, the ordinary mode of printing is preserved here. In broken inscriptions, where the first line is lost, it is only by observing whether the letters are thus anywhere reversed, that the fact of the whole being written in the Oriental mode, or in the alternate order, can be known; and it is worth noticing here, that the K, or first letter of Κοῦς, is represented by the koph or koppa, which, from its great similarity of form, is supposed to be the Latin Q.\*

The famous Sigean inscription, now almost entirely illegible, on the ancient stone erected in the Fifteenth Room of Antiquities at the British Museum (No. 107), is written βουστροφηδόν. It was first published by Chishull in his "Antiquitates Asiaticæ," and afterwards, more correctly, by Chandler, in his "Inscriptiones Antiquæ." The lower inscription, which is the more ancient, runs thus in the common type and position:—

Φανοδικο εἰμι το Η  
ερμοκρατος το Προκο  
νεσιο καγο κρατερα  
καπιστατον και Ηεθμ  
ον ες πρυτανειον κ †  
δοκα μνεμα Σιγευ  
ευσι· εαν δε τι πασχ  
ο μελεδαινεν εο  
Σιγεις· και μ' επο  
εισεν Ηαισοπος και  
Ηαδελφοι.

The upper inscription, nearly to the same effect, and written βουστροφηδόν, but in more modern letters, is as follows:—

Φανοδικο  
εἰμι τορμοκ  
ρατεος το

\* Quinct. Inst. i. 4.

† A mistake for ε.

Προκοπή  
 σιο· κρητηρ  
 α δε και υποκ  
 ρητηριον κ  
 αι ηθμον ες Π  
 ρυτανησιον  
 εδωκεν Συκε  
 ευσιλ.\*

The reader will particularly observe, that in the more modern inscription, the H is used exclusively as the long vowel E, and also the fact of *Ἀῖσῶπις* and *ἄδελφος* being aspirated in the more ancient. Now, although there can be no doubt that in very old inscriptions many words are found with the aspirate, which, in after times, were always pronounced with the soft breathing—a point closely connected, as I take it, with the nature and history of the digamma—yet in this particular instance, it is rightly suggested that the aspirates belong to the articles *ὁ* and *οἱ*, which are melted into the first syllable of their following nouns.

There are two curious chapters in Athenæus† upon the sounds and forms of the Greek letters : in the latter of these, he quotes a passage from the “Theseus” of Euripides ; in which an illiterate rustic is represented as describing the name of that hero as he had seen it carved. We may learn from this passage, amongst many others, how nearly Euripides, upon occasion, descended to the style of comedy :—

Ἐγὼ πέφυκα γραμμάτων μὲν οὐκ ἴδρις,  
μορφὰς δὲ λέξω καὶ σαφῆ τεκμήρια.  
κύκλος τις, ὡς τόρνοισιν ἐκμετρούμενος·  
οὗτος δ' ἔχει σημεῖον ἐν μέσῳ σαφές. Θ.  
τὸ δεύτερον δὲ, πρῶτα μὲν γραμμαὶ δύο,  
ταύτας διείργει δ' ἐν μέσαις ἄλλη μία. Η.

\* Rose, Inscript. p. 13.

† Lib. x. c. 79, 80.

τρίτον δὲ βόστρυχός τις, ὡς εἰλιγμένος.*	Σ.
τὸ δ' αὖ τέταρτον, ἦν μὲν εἰς ὀρθὸν μία,	
λοξαὶ δ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς τρεῖς κατεστηριγμέναι	Ε.
εἰσίν. τὸ πέμπτον δ' οὐκ ἐν εὐμαρεῖ φράσαι	
γραμμαι γάρ εἰσιν ἐκ διεστώτων δυο,	
αὐται δὲ συντρέχουσιν εἰς μίαν βάσιν.	Υ.
τὸ λοίσθιον δὲ τῷ τρίτῳ προσεμφερές.	Σ.

This kind of riddle seems to have been a favourite with the dramatists. Agathon, in his “Telephus,” tried his skill upon the same name; and his rustic is, perhaps, the more perspicuous of the two:—

Γραφῆς ὁ πρῶτος ἦν μεσόμφαλος κύκλος·  
 ὀρθοὶ τε κανόνες ἐξυγωμένοι δύο,  
 Σκυθικῷ τε τόξῳ τὸ τρίτον ἦν προσεμφερές.  
 ἔπειτα τριόδους πλάγιος ἦν προσκειόμενος·  
 ἐφ' ἐνός τε κανόνος ἦσαν ἐξυγωμένοι δύο·  
 ὅπερ δὲ τρίτον ἦν καὶ τελευταῖον πάλιν.

Athenæus quotes another attempt by Theodectes, evidently compounded of the two preceding; and he mentions that Sophocles, in his satiric drama of “Amphiaraus,” had introduced a description of letters in a dance.

The first materials on which the Greeks wrote were, as may be conjectured, slabs of marble, or plates of lead or iron. Blocks of wood were also in use. The letters were engraved with a stylus of gold or iron, called γλύφιον. Afterwards it is said that, for more transitory purposes, the leaves of the mallow and of the palm-tree were employed; and, indeed, according to some authorities, letters were called φοινικικά γράμματα, not as Phœnician, but as marked on the φοίνιξ or palm.

\* Ought not ὡς to be accented as standing for οὔτως—the rustic saying it was “thus curled,” and making a sign with his hands to describe the sigma?



The most common vegetable substance, however, used for writing, before the adoption of the Egyptian papyrus, was the bark of trees, and more particularly the fine inner membrane of the bark of the linden or lime-tree. Hence the origin of the Latin *folia* and *liber*—leaves and book. But concurrently with these vegetable substances, the Ionians were in the habit of preparing the skins of beasts for the purpose of writing: all which kinds of materials, however, metal, stone, wood, leaves, bark, and skins, entirely, or all but entirely, fell into disuse for any but public inscriptions, after the introduction of the byblos (*βύβλος* or papyrus), an Egyptian plant.

The papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*) is only now to be found in Egypt in the neighbourhood of Damietta and the Lake Menzaleh. But it grows abundantly in Syracuse; to which place it is supposed to have been sent by Ptolemy Philadelphus as a present to Hiero. According to Pliny, the stem of the papyrus was separated into thin pellicles, which were extended across each other at right angles, wetted with the water of the Nile, which glued them together, then put into a press, and finally exposed to the sun. But Bruce says that the water of the Nile has no such glutinous quality, and that it was the saccharine matter contained in the plant itself which acted as cement. Bruce made some paper of the Egyptian and Abyssinian papyrus; and Captain Smyth has made some of that growing in Sicily.

The use of paper was rare at first; but, after the foundation of Alexandria, it became the general material employed for the purpose of writing. This continued till the Greek kings of Egypt, from jealousy, as it seems, of the increasing fame of the library founded in Pergamus by the princes of the house of Attalus, probably about the middle of the second century B. C., prohibited, as far as they could, the exportation of the prepared papyrus. The consequence, however, of this

illiberal conduct was not what Ptolemy could have expected. The king of Pergamus immediately began to encourage the more careful preparation of the skins of animals (the *διφθέραι* mentioned by Herodotus), and in the end his subjects succeeded in manufacturing an article, less commodious indeed, but much more durable, than the papyrus of the Egyptians, and justly dear to lawyers and to antiquaries under its native name of parchment (*Pergamena charta*).

The Egyptian paper, however, always continued the superior article ; and a great trade was carried on in it, although it was subject to a heavy export duty. In the sixth century, Cassiodorus speaks of the papyrus as forming a forest on the banks of the Nile ; and, even two hundred years ago, it was so common, that the inferior and succulent part of the plant was an ordinary article of food for the common people. The Arabians declare Joseph to have been the first inventor of paper, which is certainly carrying it high enough for Homer ; and yet Mohammed's secretaries, in Medina, in the beginning of the seventh century after Christ, could find nothing better than palm leaves and mutton bones on which to write the Koran. The liquor used for ink was the bile or black humour of the sepia or cuttle-fish, called by Cicero *atramentum* ; and sometimes it seems that a preparation of minium or cinnabar was employed for the same purpose, where a rubric was wanted to attract particular notice.

## LIFE OF HOMER.

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It is said by Tatian \* that Theagenes of Rhegium, in the time of Cambyses, Stesimbrotus the Thasian, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, Antimachus the Colophonian, Dionysius the Olynthian, Ephorus of Cumæ, Philochorus the Athenian, Metacrides, and Chamæleon the Peripatetics, and Zenodotus, Aristophanes, Callimachus, Aristarchus, Crates, Eratosthenes, and Apollodorus, the Grammarians, all wrote concerning the poetry, the birth, and the age of Homer. Of the biographical part of the works of these authors nothing now remains, with the nominal exception of a Life of Homer, attributed to Herodotus; but which, as well on account of its minute and fabulous details and its counterfeit Ionic, as of the inconsistency † of a statement in it with the undoubted language of Herodotus in his History, is now almost universally considered as spurious. † Such as it is, however, it is a very ancient compilation, and the text from which all subsequent

Lives of  
Homer.

\* Fabric. lib. ii. c. 1. s. 3.

† In the Life it is said that Homer lived 622 years before the invasion of Greece by Xerxes; whereas Herodotus expressly records his opinion, that he lived no more than 400 years before his own (Herodotus's) time:—*Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὀμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτισι δοκέω μὲν πισχυτέρους γενέσθαι, καὶ οὐ πλείοσι.*—*Euterp.* s. 53.

\* M. de Fortia d' Urban, in his "Homère et ses Écrits," is a very undoubting advocate for its genuineness; and yet the Marquis can surely tell when a woman is painted.

stories have been taken or altered. There is a short Life of Homer, also, bearing the name of Plutarch; but which is, like the former, generally condemned as spurious, although there is reason to believe it more ancient\* than its supposed author.

It may well seem preposterous to write the life of a man, whose very individual existence some of the greatest scholars of modern days have denied, and concerning whom it is clear that even Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians, could only conjecture that he lived 400 years before his own time. Indeed I believe there is but one historical fact in either of these two Lives, and that is, that Homer, or whoever was the author, or were the authors, of the *Iliad*, was, or were, born and bred in Asiatic, or at least Eastern Greece. Of this there appears to me probable evidence in the *Iliad* itself, and beyond this everything seems as merely fabulous as the popular stories of King Arthur. However, some account of the common traditions about Homer will probably be expected here; and the story will explain the origin of several epithets which are frequently applied to him, and the meaning of many allusions to be found in the Greek and Latin writers.

There is, then, a general agreement that the Parentage. name of Homer's mother was Critheis; but the accounts differ a good deal as to his father. Ephorus† said, that there were three brothers, natives of Cumæ, Atelles, Mæon, and Dius; that Dius, being in debt, migrated to Ascera in Bœotia, and there became the father of Hesiod by his wife Pycimede; that Atelles died in Cumæ, having appointed his brother Mæon guardian of his daughter Critheis; that Critheis be-

\* Quinctilian (lib. x. 1) and Seneca (Ep. 88), both more ancient than Plutarch, seem clearly aware of this Life of Homer. I particularly recommend the perusal of the whole of this first section of the 10th book of Quinctilian to the young scholar.

† Plutarch, V. H.

coming with child by her uncle, was given in marriage to Phemius, a native of Smyrna, and a schoolmaster in that city; and that in due time afterwards, whilst she was in or near the baths on the river Meles, she gave birth to a child, who was called Melesigenes from this circumstance. Aristotle\* relates that a young woman of Ios, being with child by a Dæmon or Genius—a familiar of the Muses—fled to the coast, where she was seized by pirates, who presented her as a gift to Mæon, king of the Lydians, at that time resident in, and ruler over, Smyrna. Mæon married her; she, Critheis, gave birth to Melesigenes, as before mentioned, and upon her death, soon after, Mæon brought up her child as his own. Here we have the popular origin of the two epithets or appellatives, Melesigenes and Mæonides.

According to the same Ephorus† he was called Homer ("Ομηρος) when he became blind—the Name. Ionians so styling blind men because they were *followers* of a guide (ὁμηρεῖοντες). Aristotle's‡ account is, that the Lydians, being pressed by the Æolians, and having resolved to abandon Smyrna, made a proclamation, that whoever wished to follow them should go out of the city, and that thereupon Melesigenes said he would *follow* or *accompany* them (ὁμηρεῖν); upon which he acquired the name of Homer. Another derivation of the name is from ὁ μὴ ὁρᾶν, *one not seeing*; as to which notion of his blindness, Paterculus says that whoever thinks Homer was born blind must needs be blind himself in all his senses. It was said also that he was so called from ὁ μηρὸς (the *thigh*), because he had some mark on his thigh to denote his illegitimacy. In the Life of Homer attributed to Proclus, the story is that the poet was delivered up by the people of Smyrna to Chios as a *pledge* or *hostage* (ὁμηρος) on the conclusion of a truce. The probable derivation that

\* Plutarch, V. H.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

favours the theory of Vico and Wolf is from ὁμοῦ εἶρεν, *concinere*, or to sing in concert or with the assistance of others, as the word is used in the "Theogonia;" or perhaps from ὁμνηεῖν, to *assemble together*. But every one of these are mere conjectures, and all of them, except that which denotes the rhapsode, very unhappy ones.

Travels and  
death.

The stories proceed in general to state that Homer himself became a schoolmaster and poet of great celebrity at Smyrna, and remained there till Mentès, a foreign merchant, induced him to travel. That the author or authors of the Iliad and Odyssey must have travelled pretty extensively for those times, is unquestionable; for, besides the accurate knowledge of continental Greece Proper, displayed in the Catalogue, it is clear that the poet was acquainted with the islands both in the Ægean and the Ionian Seas, Crete, Cyprus, and the coasts of Asia Minor, from the Hellespont indefinitely southward, Phrygia, Caria, Pisidia, and Phœnicia; and possessed also considerable information with respect to Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. Amongst the Trojan allies, the Paphlagonians from the river Parthenius (the modern Bartan) and Cytorum are mentioned. The river Thermodon (the Termeh) is also named. If the Chalybes are meant in the expression *την ὁδοὺν εἰς Ἀλύβην*, this would be the farthest point eastward mentioned in the Homeric poems; the Chalybes being in the longitude of Aleppo. In his travels Homer visited Ithaca, and there became subject to a disease in his eyes, which afterwards terminated in total blindness.

This blindness, however, was by some attributed to a more dignified cause. Homer, it seems, having resolved in his mind to compose a poem of which Achilles should be the hero, and being desirous of obtaining an adequate conception of the warrior, made a pilgrimage to the Sigeon promontory, visited the tomb, and besought the mighty shade to appear for one moment in all its



former glory. Achilles rose into sight, but arrayed in armour of such intense brightness that the astonished bard became blind in the act of devout contemplation :—

“ He saw ; but, blasted with excess of light,  
Closed his eyes in endless night.”

This incident forms part of the “ Ambra ” of Angelo Politian, a poem of much elegance :—

*Ecce tuens torvum, nec vati impune videndus  
Phthius honoratis heros adstabat in armis.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Flammeus ignescit thorax, auroque minatur  
Terrifico radiatus apex, in nubila surgit  
Fraxinus, et longa rursum Hectora vulnerat umbra.  
Ipse ardens clypeo ostentat terramque, fretumque,  
Atque indefessum solem, solisque sororem  
Jam plenam, et tacito volventia sidera mundo.  
Ergo his defixus vates, dum singula visu  
Explorat miser incauto, dum lumina figit,  
Lumina nox pepulit ; tum vero exterritus hæsit,  
Voxque repressa metu, et gelidos tremor occupat artus.*

From Ithaca, Homer is said to have gone to Italy, and even to Spain ; but there is no sign in either of the two poems of any distinct knowledge of countries westward of the Ionian Sea ; although Sicily is twice mentioned in the *Odyssey* under the name of *Thrinakia* (*Λ'*. xi. 106, *M'*. xii. 127), and the *Siculi* are once named in the same poem (*Υ'*. xx. 383) as barbarians, to whose brutality the Suitors threaten to commit *Tele-machus*. Wherever he went, Homer recited his verses, which were universally admired, except at *Smyrna*, where he was a prophet in his own country. At *Phocæa*, a schoolmaster of the name of *Thestorides* obtained from Homer a copy of his poetry, and then sailed to *Chios* and recited the *Homeric* verses as his own. Homer followed ; was rescued by *Glaucus*, a goatherd,

from the attack of his dogs,\* and brought by him to Bolissus, a town in Chios, where he resided a long time, in the possession of wealth and a splendid reputation. Thestorides left the island upon Homer's arrival. According to Herodotus, he died at Ios, † on his way to Athens, and was buried near the sea-shore. Proclus says, he died in consequence of falling over a stone. Plutarch tells a very different story. He preserves two responses of an oracle to Homer, in both of which he was cautioned to beware of the young men's riddle, and relates that the poet, being on his voyage to Thebes, to attend a musical or poetical contest at the feast of Saturn in that city, landed in the island of Ios, and, whilst sitting on a rock by the sea-shore, observed some young fishermen in a boat; that Homer asked them if they had caught any thing (εἴ τι ἔχουσιν), and that the young wags, who, having had no sport, had been diligently killing as many as they could catch of certain personal companions of a race not even yet extinct, answered—“As many as we caught, we left; as many as we could not catch, we carry with us.”

Ὅσ' ἔλομεν, λιπόμεσθα· ὅς' οὐχ ἔλομεν, φερόμεσθα.

The catastrophe is, that Homer, being utterly unable to guess the meaning of this riddle, broke his heart out of pure vexation, and that the inhabitants of the island buried him with great magnificence, and put the following inscription on his tomb:—

\* An incident supposed to be recorded in that passage of the *Odyssey* (Ξ. xiv. 29) where Ulysses is in danger of being torn by the dogs at the porch of the house of Eumæus.

† And M. Fortia d'Urban says that his tomb has been found there:—“*Son tombeau y a été effectivement retrouvé en 1771 par le comte Pasch de Krienen, officier au service de Russie; ce qui est une nouvelle preuve de l'exactitude des faits contenus dans la biographie attribuée à Hérodote.*” (*Hom. et ses Ecrits*, p. 95.) What kind of reasoning is this?

ἐνθάδε τὴν ἱερὴν κεφαλὴν κατὰ γαῖα καλῶ-  
 ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων κοσμήτορα, θεῶν Ὀμηρον.

Here Homer the divine, in earthy bed,  
 Poet of heroes, rests his sacred head.

Besides this general narrative touching the country, parentage, and adventures of Homer—the one popularly received amongst the ancients—several other speculations have, at different times, been put forth upon the same subject. The author of one of the most remarkable of these was the late celebrated Theories—  
by Bryant : Jacob Bryant, who, in his “Observations on M. Le Chevalier’s Description of the Plains of Troy,” in 1795, and in a subsequent “Dissertation concerning the War of Troy,” in 1796, maintained incidentally that the author of the Iliad and Odyssey was a native of Ithaca, but descended from an Ionian, and perhaps Milesian, family, settled in Egypt. According to this view, the poet’s proper appellative, Melasigenes, denoted his being a native, or son of a native, of the banks of the Nile, which was anciently called Melas, or black ; and the change into Melesigenes was the work of the people of Smyrna, who wished to have it believed that Homer was a countryman of theirs. Bryant quotes the response of the Pythia to the Emperor Adrian, preserved in the “Contention of Homer and Hesiod,” which declared the poet to have been born at Ithaca, and to have been the son of Telemachus and Epicaste or Polycaste, the daughter of Nestor ; and he suggested that, with a considerable allowance for mere ornament, the Odyssey contains an account of the life and adventures of Homer himself. He illustrates the Ithacan and Egyptian predilections of Homer with great ingenuity, and cites many opinions to that effect from the ancient writers ; amongst others, to show how early a belief existed that the Odyssey was the poet’s family story, Bryant refers to some of the beautiful lines of Herme-

sianax of Colophon, an elegiac poet in the time of Philip and Alexander, as they are found in Athenæus :\*—

αὐτὸς δ' οὗτος ἀοιδὸς, ὃν ἐκ Διὸς αἴσα φυλάσσει  
 ἥδιστον πάντων δαίμονα μουσοπόλων,  
 λεπτὴν γ' εἰς Ἰθάκην ἀντείνειτο θεὸς Ὀμηρος  
 ὠδῆσιν, πινυτῆς εἶνεκα Πηνελόπης·  
 ἦν διὰ πολλὰ παθὼν ὀλίγην ἐσενάσσατο νῆσον,  
 πολλὸν ἀπ' εὐρείης λειπόμενος πατρίδος·  
 ἔκλαιεν δ' Ἰκάρου τε γένος, καὶ δῆμον Ἀμύκλου  
 καὶ Σπάρτην, ἰδίῳ ἀπτύμενος παθέων.

This particular conjecture as to the Ithacan origin of Homer, and the domestic character of the Odyssey, was a good deal overlooked in the vehement controversy which arose upon another part of Bryant's Homeric theory—that respecting the Iliad—in which he denied that any such city as Troy had, in fact, ever existed in the district in which it is usually placed, and consequently that the siege and the war, as referrible to a Phrygian town, were poetical fictions ; but maintained, on the other hand, that the Iliad, under a different point of view, was strictly historical, and that Homer had described a war which had in truth taken place in Egypt, although he had certainly pretended to place the scene of it somewhere in the vicinity of the Hellespont. This was the beginning of the Trojan controversy ; of which a short account will be given hereafter. The Ithacan origin of Homer met with some approbation from those who rejected the rest of the Bryantian theory ; and, since its first promulgation, it has, by an easy development, been extended to several new propositions upon the subject of Homer. The most extraordinary of these, although, perhaps, not much beyond

\* Lib. xiii. c. 71.

what Bryant himself meant, is due to the ingenuity and patriotism of Constantine Koliades, a native of Ithaca, and at present a professor in the Ionian University. Not content with having Homer for his countryman, and asserting the substantial truth of the narrative of the Odyssey, he propounds to the world—something in the manner of a revelation—the fact that Ulysses himself, the real and veritable Greek hero, was himself the author of the Iliad and Odyssey; and that to the question who Homer was, the proper answer was, and still is, in his own words,—

Εἴμ' Ὀδυσσεὺς Λαερτιάδης.

Nor is this the only or the most surprising announcement in the theory of Koliades; for he adds, that he himself is, as he has good reason to believe, a lineal descendant of Eumæus. (Was Eumæus married?)

The book, entitled *Ulysse-Homère*, in which Koliades puts forth this position, is a curious and entertaining work, very minute in the topography of the island and its neighbourhood, and occasionally happy in bringing passages from the Odyssey to bear upon his theory. He does not separate, nor did Bryant, the authorship of the poems; but, on the contrary, ascribes the particularity of the descriptions in the Iliad to the familiar acquaintance with the men and events of the war acquired by the warlike poet during his campaigns on the plain of Troy.

The venerable M. Le Chevalier, in a correspondence with which he has honoured me, has enabled me to see that he participates, generally, in the views of Koliades as to Ulysses and Homer being, in a strict sense, identical. This is no new opinion on the part of M. Le Chevalier; for it is curious enough that he had long ago come to pretty much the same conclusion upon this point as Bryant, who was M. Le Chevalier's

primary opponent on the subject of the Troad. I need not add, that M. Le Chevalier is entirely opposed to the theory of Wolf.\*

Another suggestion, ultimately based upon Bryant's, has led many eminent scholars, who reject the Wolfian hypothesis, to decide for a diversity of age and authorship between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; thus setting up two Homers at least. In fact, Vico had long before, as we have seen, ascribed the composition of the *Odyssey* to Western, and that of the *Iliad* to North-Eastern,

“ Si vous convenez,” says M. Le Chevalier, “ en effet avec Bryant et avec moi, que l'histoire d'Ulysse nous rétrace fidèlement celle d'Homère,—que toutes les aventures de l'une sont celles d'autre,—que tous ces malheurs, ces chagrins, ces émotions si admirablement peintes, existaient dans le cœur du poète ;—si Homère, en un mot, lorsqu'il nous a chanté toute la vie d'Ulysse, a eu pour objet de nous faire connaître toute la sienne, il faut rigoureusement et nécessairement en conclure que cet Homère, quelqu'il soit, n'a rien de commun avec les autres poètes épiques, qui peignent le plus souvent et en grande partie d'invention et d'idée ;—qu'il a sans cesse la nature sous les yeux ;—que d'innombrables tableaux tombent de sa plume sans effort parcequ'il écrit toujours dans sa propre histoire les scènes dont il a été témoin, et qu'il puise constamment dans la source pure de la vérité, qu'il orne sans doute de tous les charmes dont sa brillante imagination et son cœur sensible peuvent l'embellir. Et voilà la véritable raison pour laquelle ce miraculeux génie n'a point eu de semblables, et qu'il n'en aura jamais, à moins que la Providence ne donne encore le jour à un autre héros, acteur et témoin des mêmes prodiges auquel elle accorde aussi l'admirable talent de les chanter.

“ Maintenant, cet Homère, est-il né à Ithaque ou sur les bords du Meles? Était-il le fils de Laërte, le mari de Pénélope, et le père de Télémaque? A-t-il fait avec Nestor le savant dénombrement de l'armée d'Agamemnon? A-t-il combattu dans la plaine de Troie? A-t-il navigué long-temps avant de retrouver sa famille et sa patrie?”

M. Le Chevalier adds, that he has a new conjecture on the subject of the mysterious silence of antiquity as to the real author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. I trust he will bear in mind that how different soever the opinions of scholars may be upon the history of the Homeric poems, there will be but one feeling of respect in the literary world for any expression which he may choose to give to his own views.



Greece. Mr. Knight assents generally to this, and separates the two poems by a hundred years; and Mr. Milman, limiting the interval to a less period of time, inclines to suppose that the author of the *Iliad* was an Asiatic Greek of Thessalian or *Æolic* descent; and the author of the *Odyssey* a Peloponnesian, who composed his poem for the delight of maritime and migratory Western Greece.

Knight and  
Milman.

This suggestion of a western origin for the *Odyssey* has given birth to almost as much geographical controversy as Bryant's annihilation of the Phrygian Troy. One of the most amusing and ingenious books on this subject is by Sir Wil-

Geogra-  
phical  
difficulties.

Ithaca.

liam Gell. If he is not mistaken, the modern Thiaki presents, in every particular, an exact picture of the Ithaca of Homer. He finds the rock Korax still called Petra Koraka; the fountain Arethusa; the hog-sties of Eumæus cut in the rock; the cavern of the Nymphs; the gulf or bay of Phoreys, and even the ruins of the palace of Ulysses. Koliades is still more minute, and represents the *Odyssey* as almost a road-book of Ithaca. But great perplexities remain, after all that has been written by these two enthusiastic *Ithacans*; and these perplexities are put in a strong point of view by M. Völeker, in his treatise on the Homeric cosmography and geography. The two main difficulties are, the disappearance of Dulichium, and the north-eastern position of the present Ithaca. The lines out of which the controversy has chiefly arisen are the following:—

Dulichium.

ναιετάω δ' Ἰθάκην εὐδείελλον· ἐν δ' ὄρος αὐτῇ  
 Νήριτον, εἰνοσίφωλλον, ἀριπρεπέες· ἀμφὶ δὲ νῆσοι  
 πολλαὶ ναιετάουσι μάλα σχεδὸν ἀλλήλῃσιν,  
 Δουλίχιόν τε, Σάμη τε, καὶ ὑλήεσσα Ζάκυνθος·  
 αὐτὴ δὲ χθαμαλὴ πανοπερτάτη ἐν ἀγρὶ κεῖται,  
 πρὸς Ῥέον, αἱ δὲ τ' ἀνευθε πρὸς ἧώ τ', ἡέλιόν τε.

*Od.* I. ix. 21.

From Dulichium came fifty-two suitors to Penelope; from Same (supposed to be the modern Cephalonia), twenty-four; from Zacynthus, twenty; and from Ithaca only twelve. Now, what has become of Dulichium, which, certainly, according to a reasonable interpretation of the *Odyssey*, must be taken as having been the most important island of the whole group? No place can now be found to answer the description. Strabo places a Dolicha amongst the Echinades, a collection of rocky islets situated near the mouth of the Achelous. In the Catalogue, Dulichium and the Echinades are mentioned together, but not as if Dulichium were itself one of those islands; and they are placed, not where we are now supposing them to be, at the mouth of the Achelous on the coast of Acarnania, but opposite to Elis:—

*οἱ δ' ἐκ Δουλιχίου, Ἐχινάων θ' ἱεράων  
νήσων, αἱ ναίουσι πέρην ἁλὸς, Ἡλίδος ἄντα.*

*Il. B'. II. v. 625.*

The mouth of the Achelous can scarcely be said to have been over-against Elis, as the limits of that province were drawn in the times of Herodotus and Thucydides: and, after all, what island is there in that direction in the least degree answering the Homeric account? It has been suggested that the ancient Dulichium has been long since attached to the continent by the depositions of the river; again, it has been supposed to have sunk in the sea; and, again, it has been thought to be, in fact, a part of Cephalonia, and that the poet was mistaken in supposing Same and Dulichium to be separate islands. If we adopt this latter conjecture—which is the only one offering any solution of the difficulty—what becomes of the poet's boasted familiarity with the localities of the main scene of his poem? Is it possible that a native of Thiaka could be ignorant of the entire

insularity of Cephalonia, which lies in sight, within one or two hours' sail from his own shore? It is worthy of observation, also, with reference to this subject, that, in the Catalogue, Ulysses is apparently the chief of several tribes besides the inhabitants of Ithaca; and that all his subjects, including the people of Zacynthus, Cephalonia, and other districts on the continent, were called in general Cephalonians (Κεφαλλῆνες), whilst the troops from Dulichium and the Echinades were under the command of Meges. See the passage:—

αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἦγε Κεφαλλῆνας μεγαθύμους,  
οἳ δ' Ἰθάκην, εἶχον καὶ Νήριτον εἰνὸς ἱφύλλον,  
καὶ Κροκύλει' ἐνέμοντο, καὶ Αἰγίλιπα τρηχεῖαν,  
οἳ τε Ζάκυνθον ἔχον, ἧδ' οἳ Σάμον ἀμφεμένοντο,  
οἳ τ' Ἡπειρον ἔχον, ἧδ' ἀντεπέραι' ἐνέμοντο. v. 631.

But the seeming inconsistency of the actual situation of Thiaki itself with the Homeric de-<sup>Ithaca.</sup>scription of Ithaca, is a more stubborn difficulty. The Ithaca of the Odyssey is surely placed to the west of all the other islands: it lies in the sea, says the poet—

—— εἰν ἅλϊ κεῖται  
πρὸς Ζόφον, αἱ δέ τ' ἀνευθε πρὸς ἧῶ τ', ἡέλιόν τε.

Strabo, and some modern scholars, have contended for πρὸς Ζόφον, meaning towards the north; but the direct antithesis contained in the line itself, is enough to fix its sense in this place; not to mention that its prevalent meaning throughout the Iliad and Odyssey is the same. What says Hector, for example?—

εἴτ' ἐπὶ δέξι' ἴωσι πρὸς ἧῶ τ', ἡέλιόν τε,  
εἴτ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τοίγε ποτὶ Ζόφον ἡερόεντα.

Il. M. xii. 239.

The Greek augur stood with his face to the north, and,

of course, had the east to his right, and the west on his left, ἐπ' ἀριστερά. Besides which, it can scarcely be denied that the general effect of the words

αὐτὴ δὲ χθονὶ μαλ' ἢ παντοπερτάτῃ εἰν ἄλλ' ἰκεῖται,

connected with the line which follows and those which precede, represents Ithaca as lying aloof from, and to the west of, all the other islands. Add to which, that the Phœnicians, sailing from the Syracusan Ortygia (Od. xv. 481), as Völcker understands it, come direct to Ithaca, without encountering Cephalonia, which lies right across the passage. Now, in fact, Thiaki—the Ithaca of Sir W. Gell and Koliades, &c.—lies to the east of, but not aloof from, the Ionian group; and none of the numerous attempts which have been made to remove this exception to the poet's local knowledge seem at all admissible. Völcker's own view is, that Cephalonia was the Homeric Ithaca, and the modern Ithaca or Thiaki the ancient Same.

Theories—  
by Schub-  
arth;

According to the theory of M. Schubarth,\* a decided opponent of Wolf, Homer was a Trojan poet, living under the dynasty of the descendants of Æneas in Ilium. He represents the kingdom of Priam to have been in a state of much greater civilization and refinement than any part of Greece; and remarks that his genealogy ascends higher than any other in the Iliad, and that his ancestors are commemorated as builders of cities and general benefactors. With this peaceful character Schubarth strongly contrasts the dark and troubled histories given of all the eminent Greek families, and remarks that many, even of the Homeric heroes—as Phoenix, Patroclus, Tlepolemus, and others—had, in their youth, been obliged to fly from their native countries on account of

\* Ideen ueber Homer und sein Zeitalter—Thoughts upon Homer and his Age.

some deed of violence committed by them. He thinks that the same character of inferior civilization is meant to be ascribed to the Achæan Greeks, by putting them under the patronage of Juno, Neptune, and Pallas—violent and warlike deities—whilst Apollo and Venus, and even the great father of gods and men, are all the ardent, though unavailing, protectors of Troy. In these circumstances, and in the contrast of Priam with Agamemnon, and Hector with Achilles, Schubarth discovers the poet's partiality to the Asiatic cause, and his respect for the posterity of Æneas, whose continued sovereignty in Troy is indicated in the *Iliad* itself. The *Odyssey* is attributed by this critic to the same author, who details, with vindictive delight, the public misfortunes and domestic miseries of the invaders of his country.

This Trojan theory is entirely rejected by Dr. Bernhard Thiersch,\* who even denies the <sup>Thiersch ;</sup> Asiatic origin of the poems altogether. He assents to Wolf's hypothesis, but maintains that the Peloponnesus was the native country both of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; that the bards and their songs wandered, with the Ionians, first to Attica, and thence to Asia; and that subsequently, after the troubles of the Doric invasion had subsided, they returned, as strangers, to European Greece. That the *Odyssey* belongs to the Peloponnesus is, as we have seen, the probable position of those who separate the authorship of the two poems; and, in confirmation of it, it is well worthy of attention with how much accuracy and familiarity the interior of the Peloponnesus is treated in the *Odyssey*, whilst that poem hardly contains a single descriptive allusion to the coast of Asia Minor. But in the *Iliad*, as Mr. Milman very justly remarks, there are descriptions which seem conclusively to point out the knowledge of

\* Ueber das Zeitalter und Vaterland des Homer—On the Age and Country of Homer.

an eye-witness; and he mentions, in particular, the simile of the birds soaring and settling on the meadows of the Caÿster :—

— ὥστ' ὀρνίθων πετεηνῶν ἔθνεα πολλὰ  
 χηνῶν, ἢ γεράνων, ἢ κύκνων δοῦλιχοῦσίρων,  
 Ἀσίῳ ἐν λειμῶνι, Καῦστρίου ἀμφὶ ἕεθρα,  
 ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ποτῶνται, ἀγαλλόμεναι πτερύγεσσι,  
 κλαγγηδὸν προκαθίζόντων, σμαραγεῖ δέ τε λειμῶν.

Il. B'. ii. 459.

Not less their number than th' embodied cranes  
 Or milk-white swans in Asius' watery plains,  
 That o'er the windings of Caÿster's springs  
 Stretch their long necks, and clap their rustling wings:  
 Now tower aloft, and course in airy rounds;  
 Now light with noise, with noise the field resounds.

POPE.

And also the notice of the Mæonian or Carian woman, employed in dyeing ivory purple :—

Ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοίνικι μίχῃη  
 Μήονις, ἢ Κάειρα, παρήϊον ἔμμεναι ἵππων  
 κεῖται δ' ἐν θαλάμῳ, πολέες τὲ μιν ἠρήσαντο  
 ἵππῃες φορέειν βασιλῆϊ δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,  
 ἀμφότερον, κόσμος δ' ἵππῳ, ἐλατῆρί τε κῦδος.\*

As when a Carian or Mæonian maid,  
 To deck a steed, in all his pomp array'd,  
 Stains her pure ivory with purpureal dye,  
 And guards her treasure from the public eye :  
 Though oft by many a chieftain sought in vain,  
 Kings may alone that rare possession gain.

SOTHEY.

Wood.

Wood's argument for the Ionian origin of the Homeric poems, founded upon the language used in describing the direction and effects of some of

\* Il. Δ'. IV. 141.



the winds, is certainly curious. The west or north-west wind (*Ζέφυρος*) is always represented in the *Iliad* as cold and stormy, and very often as blowing from Thrace :—

‘Ως δ’ ἄνεμοι δύο πόντον ὀρίνετον ἰχθυόεντα,  
 Βορέης καὶ Ζέφυρος, τῷ τε Θρήκηθεν ἄητον,  
 ἔλθόντ’ ἐξ ἀπίνης· ἄμυδις δέ τε κῦμα κελαινὸν  
 κορβύεται· πολλὰ δὲ παρ᾽ ἑῶν ἄλλα φῦκος ἔχευαν.\*

“As when two winds—the north and west, or north-west, which blow or blows from Thrace—suddenly tempest the sea; the black wave curls up, and the weeds are cast upon the shore.” It seems impossible to imagine that a man, living in Greece Proper, would describe the west wind as blowing from Thrace, a country actually to the east of the writer; nor could such a gale of wind by any means throw the sea-weed on a westward coast. The point of view is evidently from the Ionian or Asiatic side of the *Ægean*, which would present a lee-shore to the west and north-west, as it does—and a very dangerous one—to this day. Again, in the catalogue the *Locrians* are described as dwelling *beyond*, or on the other side of, *Eubœa* :—

Λοκρῶν, οἳ ναίουσι πέραν ἱερῆς Εὐβοίης.†

This is what an Asiatic would correctly say; but would an Athenian, or Thessalian, or Ithacan, say so? Wood also remarks, that the order in which *Otus* and *Ephialtes* are said, in the *Odyssey*, to have piled up the mountains, is true to the eye of a person approaching from the east, and also such as their relative sizes and shapes required :—

“Οσσαν ἐπ’ Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ’ Ὀσση  
 Πήλιον εἰνοσίφυλλον.‡

\* *Il.* i. IX. 4.

† *Il.* v. II. 535.

‡ *Od.* λ. XI. 314.

Olympus is the base ; then Ossa ; and the sublime pyramid is crowned with Pelion and all its shaking woods. Virgil reverses the order, and places the apex on the ground and the base in the air :—

Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam,  
Scilicet atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum.\*

It should be observed, that twice only in the Homeric poems—in the *Odyssey*—is Zephyrus invested with the gentle character which is familiar to us from the Latin poets. These instances are in the descriptions of the gardens of Alcinous, and of the Elysian plain (*Od.* VII. 119, and IV. 568); both of them scenes of fancy.

According to Vargus Maciucca, in his work  
Maciucca. entitled “*I Fenicj primi abitatori di Napoli.*” Homer was a native of Cumæ in Italy ; and, according to the same authority, the Eubæans—the colonizers of Cumæ—having also succeeded the Phœnicians in the establishment of Naples, it followed that Homer was, in some sense, a Neapolitan, or related in blood to the Neapolitans. The author himself, a true Naples man, gives expression to his patriotic joy upon this great discovery in the following passage, which it would be unfair to translate :—“*S’ ingrandirà il nome Napolitano in sì e tal maniera per aver avuto il vanto d’ essere stato Euboico Omero, che non potrà andar innanzi, e sarà sempre la nostra città oggetto di onesta rivalità perchè troppo felice in vantando sì grande origine. Sarebbe degno tal fatto storico dal nostro comune di un pubblico monumento in bronzo, o in marmo, che gli farebbe maggior decoro e fama che qualsivoglia simulacro d’ altro, come chè distinto e sovrano Eroe, e servirebbe a destare ne’ petti d’ ognuno il vecchio ardore, e specialmente della nostra gioventù generosa, che ne’ tempi felici era sì acceso di legger Omero, da cui si*

\* *Geor.* I. 281.

apprende più che da Crantore e da Crisippo, non che da moderni filosofanti. Così diceano gli antichi, e voleano che i piccoli fanciulli il primo nome che a balbettar imparassero, fosse Omero, ed era l' ultima voce quasi di cigno, che pronunziava il vecchio spirante, e dopo quello de' sommi Dei non ve n' era altro più comune e più noto."

I must conclude this summary of opinions as to the person and birthplace of Homer, by recording the judgment of Joshua Barnes, of whom Bentley said Barnes. that he knew as much Greek as an Athenian cobbler. Barnes surmised that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were amongst the numerous works of Solomon; and he showed that, by reading *Omeros* backwards in the Hebrew manner, we should come to Soremo, which was the same as Solemo. *Quod erat demonstrandum.* But I believe it is a mistake to suppose that Barnes ever wrote any book upon this subject, as has been commonly said.

There has been as much doubt and controversy about the age of Homer, as about him- Age. self and his poems. According to the argument of Wood,\* Haller,† and Mitford,‡ he lived about the middle of the ninth century B. C.; which date agrees exactly with the conjecture of Herodotus, who wrote B. C. 444, and is founded on the assumption that Homer must have lived before the return of the Heraclidæ or Dorians into Peloponnesus; an event which took place within eighty years after the Trojan war. The Newtonian calculation is also adopted, which fixes the capture of Troy as low as B. C. 904. The argument is, that it is extremely improbable that Homer, so minute as he is in his descriptions of Greece, and so full of the histories of the reigning dynasties in its various districts,

\* Essay on the Original Genius, &c.

† Heyne, Excurs. iv. ad Il. ω'. xxiv.

‡ Hist. of Greece, i.

should never take notice of so very remarkable an occurrence as the almost total abolition of the kingly government throughout Greece, and the substitution of the republican form in its stead. Now this national revolution was coincident with, or immediately consequent on, the Doric invasion, or, as it is commonly called, the return of the descendants of Hercules. It is said also, that the poet mentions the grandchildren of Æneas as reigning in Troy, in the prophecy of Neptune in the *Iliad* :—

Νῦν δὲ δὴ Αἰνείας βίη Τρώεσσι ἀνάξει,  
καὶ παῖδες παίδων, τοί κεν μετόπισθε γένωνται.\*

Then shall Æneas o'er the Trojans reign,  
And children's children his great line maintain. —

And that in another speech † of Juno's he seems to intimate the insecure state of the chief existing dynasties of the race of Pelops; and it is inferred from this, that he flourished during the third generation, or upwards of sixty years after the destruction of Troy. Upon this argument Heyne ‡ remarks, that in the first place a poet, who was celebrating heroes of the Pelopid race, had no proper occasion to take notice of a revolution by which their families were expatriated and their kingdoms abolished; and next, that the Ionic migration took place sixty years later than the return of the Heraclidæ; and certainly, if the Ionic migration is to be considered a single and determinate act of coloniza-

\* *Il.* γ'. XX. 308. Almost the same words occur in the Hymn to Venus, v. 197, 198; and they destroy the very foundation of the Roman claim to Trojan descent through Virgil's hero. The Augustan poet, either on his own authority, or under shelter of an old reading of πάντεσσι for Τρώεσσι, writes—

“Nunc domus Æneæ cunctis dominabitur oris,  
Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis.”

† Δ'. IV. 51-4.

‡ Excurs. ad *Il.* Ω'. XXIV.

tion, and Homer be assumed to be an Asiatic Ionian, it may very fairly be urged, that as he never alludes to this migration, though it was certainly a very remarkable event, and one which he must have known, he may just as well, for other or the same reasons, have been silent on the subject of a revolution by which that migration was caused. The Arundel Marble places Homer B. C. 907, the Ionian Migration B. C. 1044, the Return of the Heraclidæ B. C. 1104, and the Capture of Troy B. C. 1184. Heyne approves this calculation, as, upon the whole, the most consistent with all the authorities; but it is at variance with Newton's calculation; and indeed the whole chronology of Greece, anterior to the Olympic reckoning, is so exceedingly obscure, that it is quite preposterous to contend for any thing beyond the relative antiquities of things.

The vicissitudes to which Homer's reputation and influence have been subject, deserve notice. From the first known collection of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the time of the Pisistratidæ to the promulgation of Christianity, the love and reverence with which the name of Homer was regarded, went on, upon the whole, constantly increasing, till at last public games were instituted in his honour, statues dedicated, temples erected, and sacrifices offered to him as a divinity. There were such temples at Smyrna,\* Chios, and Alexandria; and, according to *Ælian*,† the Argives sacrificed to, and invoked, the names and presence of Apollo and Homer together.

This unrivalled popularity, founded, of course, on the transcendant excellence of the poetry, and on the national sympathies of the Greeks, was fortified and sanctioned by the ardent expressions of respect in which almost all their great men indulged when speaking of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. These expressions are scattered

\* Cic. pro Archia.

† Lib. ix. c. 15.

throughout the Greek literature ; and the higher the scale of genius rises, the more affectionate they become, and the more sensibly is the transfusion of the Homeric spirit felt. And this not only in the works of the great poets, as Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides ; but also, and hardly less strikingly, in the pages of the mighty masters of history, philosophy, and oratory, in Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, and Demosthenes. To all these Homer, the poet Homer, was what Moses was to the ancient Hebrew of sensibility and genius—to the Davids and Isaiahs ; and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were the same universal presence to the Greeks, as their Law or Pentateuch to the children of Israel. But neither the praise nor the imitation of these more celebrated authors, nor the vehement advocacy of other distinguished men, especially the physical philosophers, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Arcesilaus, Anisthenes, Zeno, Chrysippus, and others, did so much towards establishing the authority of Homer upon a permanent basis in the old world, as the methodical criticism and determinate sanction of Aristotle. This great writer, having framed to himself an idea of the Epic poem, evidently derived from the Sophoclean standard of tragedy, supposed that he had found this idea realized in faultless perfection in the *Iliad* ; and this point once assumed, he had no difficulty in giving a reason for every movement, and in erecting a general rule upon every particular accident of this particular poem. Aristotle seems to have regarded the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* just as if they were the works of Pindar or Sophocles : that they were five or six hundred years old at the date of his treatise on poetry does not appear ever to have occurred to his mind, or, at least, to have attracted any of his attention ; and hence he examines the poems upon principles of composition, the almost total inapplicability of which to the heroic minstrelsies of the Homeric age, it is wonderful that he should not



have perceived. Still, whatever we may think of the sagacity of Aristotle's view of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, there can be no doubt that we moderns are deeply indebted to him for having mainly helped to preserve those inestimable treasures from destruction: the very edition which he prepared or approved was in itself a most beneficial caution; and his authority prevailed with a long series of disciples of the Peripatetic school to cultivate the study of the Homeric Epics with the continually increasing resources of philosophy and grammar. The extraordinary veneration and care of the Alexandrian critics have been already mentioned; and, after them, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Strabo may be regarded as the two most effective promoters, in their different ways, of the fame and authority of Homer. The first set himself to exhibit the rhetorical artifice and metrical skill of the poet; and the last to elevate him into an invaluable treasure of the ancient geography, and a perfect rule of poetical decorum. Nor must I omit in this place the great names of Demetrius Phalereus and Plutarch, who, in widely differing ages and dissimilar states of feeling, were the authors of treatises now lost, but of much worth in ancient estimation, upon the style and invention, the morals and philosophy, of Homer.

The Latin writers upon this, as upon most other points of literature, echoed the words of their masters the Greeks. From Cicero and Lucretius, down to Quintilian and Ausonius, there is a general attribution of supremacy to this immortal name; and the flattering surmise of Propertius—

“Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade”——

is strongly expressive of the universal feeling of men of letters in the age of Augustus. The Roman lawyers are said to have frequently cited Homer as direct

authority in matters of jurisprudence; and the continuance of this feeling of affectionate respect may be traced in the *pater omnis virtutis*, by which he is emphatically characterized in the Pandects of Justinian, A.D. 534. Nevertheless, there were not wanting, both amongst the ancient Greeks and Romans, many who censured particular defects in the Iliad and Odyssey; and some of these criticisms proceeded from the warmest admirers of the general merit of the Homeric poetry. But the objections of almost all these writers are confined to the alleged abuses in the Homeric representation of the gods; and the grave and earnest tone of these censures shows, in a striking manner, the national interest felt by the Greeks in their two grand heroic poems. We hear no complaints made of the daring sarcasms of Æschylus, or the flippant free-thinking of Euripides; and the absolute ribaldry of Aristophanes seems to have excited no displeasure in those who vehemently declaimed against Homer's battle of the gods. It is clear that it was on account of the primeval, authoritative, biblical character of the Homeric poetry, that such men as Heraclitus, and Plato, and Xenophanes expressed themselves so harshly in respect of particular passages in it. It was the indignation of a Protestant at seeing Bel and the Dragon side by side with Isaiah or St. Paul. So far was Plato, the most influential of those whose censure has been preserved, from lightly esteeming the poetry, as such, that he burned his own verses, in the true despair of a man of genius at rivalling the glorious hexameters which describe, as it is thought, the conflict of the Nile and the Sea;\* whilst Cicero calls him the Homer of philosophers; and Themistius observes, that although Plato had affected to abjure his master, he, in fact, retained his exact likeness:—

\* *H. p.* XVII. 263.

Κείνου γὰρ τοιοῖδε πόδες, τοιαῖδε τὲ χεῖρες,  
ἰφθαλμῶν τε βολαί, κεφαλῇ τ', ἐφύπερθε τε χαῖται.  
*Od. Δ'. IV. 149.*

The first critic of Homer, in the genuine spirit of the French disputants of the last century, was that often named, but not very well known. Zoilus. personage, Zoilus. He was, as it is said, a native of Amphipolis in Macedonia, and it is also said that he visited Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, B. C. 278. But as he was also a disciple of Polycrates, a contemporary of Socrates, and Demosthenes is declared to have studied his orations, it is difficult to believe in the identity of the persons, unless we allow him to have attained a very great age. However that may be, if he has not been grossly slandered, his manners and morals, whoever he was, were as ill conditioned as his criticism. But the spirit displayed against this unfortunate Homero-mastix is so exceedingly bitter, that we may hesitate to believe all the strange things charged upon him as a man or a critic; or, if we do believe them, it is almost impossible not to attribute them to insanity. The five or six passages, which the ill-judging zeal of his enemies has alone preserved to us out of his nine books against Homer are, indeed, absurd; if his whole work was no better, he might deserve contempt, but could scarcely have justified much serious anger. Yet we are told that at the Olympic games, where he was bold enough to attempt to recite his attack on Homer, he was hurled from the Scironian rocks; that he was burned in effigy in Egypt at a grand festival in honour of Homer; and that at Smyrna, whither he had retired, he was burned in reality, his pyre being composed in part of a collection of the copies of his *Ψόγος*, or Censure of Homer. He was called the rhetorical dog; and his person and dress are represented as equally hideous and fantastic.

Vitruvius, in a passage\* of savage exultation at this poor creature's real or supposed fate, mentions the reply of Ptolemy Philadelphus upon being petitioned by Zoilus for assistance. "Homer," said he, "has been dead a thousand years; yet he maintains, and has maintained, many thousands of persons: surely Zoilus, who boasts a larger share of genius, ought, at least, to maintain himself, if no one else." Vitruvius is of opinion that whatever may have been the actual fate of Zoilus, he richly deserved it; and Martial, long afterwards, expressed a fervent wish to see the poor man hanged,—

"Pendentem volo Zoilum videre:"

pointing his aspiration, no doubt, at some little Zoilus of his own. The six objections of Zoilus, preserved in the Scholia attributed to Didymus and in Longinus, are the following:—

1. Homer is very ridiculous, when he makes such a god as Apollo employ himself in killing dogs and mules.

2. Homer is very ridiculous in describing Diomed's helmet and armour as sparkling and in a blaze of fire about him; for then why was he not burnt by it?

3. Homer was a fool for making Idæus leave his chariot; he should have fled in it.

4. Homer wanted manners, in making Achilles turn Priam, a king, out of his tent.

5. Homer says that Ulysses lost an equal number of men out of each ship, which is impossible.

6. Homer is ridiculous in turning his men into pigs.

This is sad stuff, to be sure; but it is not without parallel in the ungarbled writings of greater wits than Zoilus, as we shall see. The names of two other obscure Zoilists have been preserved, like burs sticking on a robe of silk:—Daphidas of Telmissus in Lycia,

\* Proem. lib. vii.

who amused himself with devising abusive tricks upon Apollo and Homer together, and whose fate is mentioned in Cicero; and one Parthenius of Phocæa, a poet and geographer, who gave it as his opinion that the Iliad and Odyssey were mere masses of literary filth. In old times, these outbreaks of barbarism excited the most violent animosity in the lovers of the great poet; in the present day a no less ardent, but a wiser, spirit of admiring criticism will content itself with this simple revenge on the Zoilists of every age and country: *Ex Homero nomen habent.*

It was somewhere about the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, when the struggle between the old and the new religions was warm and active, that the tide of admiration which, upon the whole, had flowed so steadily, began to turn. "Heathenism," says Pope,\* "was then to be destroyed, and Homer appeared the father of it, whose fictions were at once the belief of the Pagan religion, and the objections of Christianity against it. He became, therefore, deeply involved in the question, and not with that honour which had hitherto attended him, but as a criminal, who had drawn the world into folly. He was, on the one hand,† accused of having framed fables upon the works of Moses; as the rebellion of the Giants from the building of Babel; and the casting of Ate, or Strife, out of heaven from the fall of Lucifer. He was exposed, on the other hand, for those which he is said to invent; as when Arnobius‡ cries out, "This is the man who wounded your Venus, imprisoned your Mars, who freed even your Jupiter by Briareus, and who finds authorities for all your vices." Mankind was derided§ for whatever he had hitherto made them believe; and Plato,|| who expelled him his commonwealth, has, of all the

\* Essay on Homer.

† Just. Mart. Admon. ad Gentes.

‡ Advers. Gentes, lib. vii.

§ Tertull. Apol. c. 14.

|| Arnobius, ibid. Eusebius, Præp. Evangel. lib. xiv. c. 10.

Christian  
Fathers.

philosophers, found the best quarter from the Fathers for passing that sentence. His finest beauties began to take a new appearance of pernicious qualities; and, because they might be considered as allurements to fancy, or supports to those errors with which they were mingled, they were to be depreciated while the contest of faith was in being. It was hence that the reading of them was discouraged; that we hear Rufinus accusing St. Jerome for it; and that St. Austin\* rejects him as the grand master of fable; though, indeed, the *dulcissime vanus*, which he applies to Homer, looks but like a fondling manner of parting with him.

Decline of  
Greek lan-  
guage.

In the dark ages, which followed the final destruction of the Roman empire in the West, the knowledge of Greek was gradually lost in the central and northern parts of Italy and the Transalpine kingdoms, and the name of Homer survived in tradition only, or in the scanty records of a few monasteries alone. But in the Byzantine territories literature struggled on much longer, like a taper quivering in the open air of night; at one moment seemingly extinguished; at another recovering its force, till it was finally delivered, when almost spent, into the fostering hands of the great Italians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the latter part of the twelfth century, Eustathius, the celebrated archbishop of Thessalonica, composed his invaluable commentary on Homer. He entitled it *Περὶ Ὁμήρου*, and it consists, in a great measure, of extracts of older scholiasts, such as Apion, Heliodorus, Demosthenes of Thrace, Porphyry, and others. In the same century, John Tzetzes paraphrased and wrote scholia on Homer; and Isaac Comnenus Porphyrogenitus was the author of many works on Homeric subjects generally, some of which have been printed, and others not. Indeed, Homer seems to have occupied

\* Confess. lib. i. c. 14.



his full proportion of the attention of literary men in Greece till the capture of Constantinople; and, happily, his old crime, of being the father of Paganism, was so far forgotten, that he escaped being included in that solemn bonfire of the Greek lyric and elegiac poets which is said to have taken place at Constantinople in the tenth or eleventh century. The passage in which Aleyonius\* mentions this report is worth extracting for its singularity. He introduces Johannes de Medicis, afterwards Leo X., as saying—"Audiebam etiam puer ex Demetrio Chalcondyle, Græcarum rerum peritissimo, sacerdotes Græcos tanta floruisse auctoritate apud Cæsares Byzantinos, ut integra (illorum gratia) complura de veteribus Græcis poemata combusserint; imprimisque ea ubi amores, turpes lusus, et nequitiae amantium continebantur; atque ita Menandri, Diphili, Apollodori, Philemonis, Alexis fabellas, et Sapphus, Erinnæ, Anacreontis, Mimnermi, Bionis, Alemanis, Alcæi carmina intercidisse:—tum pro his substituta Nazianzeni nostri poemata, quæ, etsi excitent animos nostrorum hominum ad flagrantiorum religionis cultum, non tamen verborum Atticam proprietatem, et Græcæ linguæ elegantiam edocent. Turpiter quidem sacerdotes isti in veteres Græcos malevoli fuerunt, sed integritatis, probitatis, et religionis, maximum dedere testimonium." Gravina, going upon the same tradition, says:—"De' lirici (da Pindaro, ed *Anacreonte* in fuori?) non sono a noi rimasi, che pochi frammenti, per essere state da' vescovi e sacerdoti Greci le loro opere bruciate, ed estinte con esse le oscenità e gli amori, che contenevano; in luogo delle quali, con maggior vantaggio della religione, e della pietà, furon sostituiti i poemi di San Gregorio Nazianzeno."†

The light of Greek literature had not, however, been entirely extinguished in Naples and Calabria. King Robert (A.D. 1309) became an effective

Revival.

\* Dial. de Exilio, p. 69.

† Ragione Poetica, p. 57.

Barlaam patron of Greek, and his exertions were afterwards powerfully seconded by Bernard Barlaam, the monk. This famous monk was a Calabrian Greek, who had studied at Thessalonica, and afterwards lived at the Byzantine court. Andronicus III. (Palæologus) sent him, in 1339, as an ambassador into Italy and the West, to propose the union of the Greek and Latin Churches, and to solicit aid against the Turks. Petrarch saw Barlaam at Avignon, and prevailed upon the learned monk to assist him in acquiring a knowledge of Greek. Barlaam also wished to learn Latin, and they mutually instructed each other. It was with Barlaam that Petrarch first read Homer and Plato. Before this he had only seen, as he says himself, some miserable translations and an abridgment of the Iliad. From Barlaam he procured a complete copy of the Homeric poems; it came from Thessalonica. Upon leaving Avignon, Barlaam went to Naples, where Boccaccio saw and admired him; and he thence returned to Constantinople. In 1341 he went to Naples again; the next year he visited Petrarch at Avignon, and in the end of that year, chiefly by Petrarch's means, he was raised to the bishopric of Geraci in Calabria, where he lived till his death, in 1348. One of his most distinguished pupils was Leontius Pilatus, a Greek of Thessalonica, for whom (in 1360) Boccaccio procured a professorship to be instituted in the new university at Florence; and Leontius gave lectures for two years in the Homeric poetry. From him chiefly it was that Boccaccio obtained his Greek learning; and in the delightful correspondence of Petrarch with Boccaccio, we find his name constantly mentioned. Dante, in the commencement of the fourteenth century, had placed Homer at the head of all the ancient poets, although I do not apprehend that Dante was able to read the Iliad or Odyssey in Greek. The ancient Latin versions of

Barlaam  
the monk;  
Petrarch;  
Boccaccio.

Leontius  
Pilatus.

Dante.

Livius Andronicus in iambics, of Accius Labeo in hexameters, ridiculed by Persius, and of Cnæus Matius had perished. Such translations as still existed were in every way imperfect; and we are told that Petrarch and Boccaccio caused the first complete Latin version of Homer to be made by Leontius. Still, as a point of literary history, it is interesting to see the terms in which the great Italian poet speaks of Homer. He places him in Limbo—that quaint fairy-land of the Romish Church—but, as Dante describes it, a much more comfortable place than the terrible Limbo of Mr. Coleridge\* :—

Vidi quattro grand' ombre a noi venire;  
Sembianza avevan nè trista nè lieta.

Lo buon maestro cominciò a dire:  
“Mira colui con quella spada in mano,  
Che vien dinanzi a' tre sì come sire.

Quegli è Omero poeta sovrano:  
L' altro è Orazio satiro che viene,  
Ovidio è 'l terzo, e l' ultimo è Lucano.

Perocchè ciascun meco si conviene  
Nel nome che sonò la voce sola;  
Hannomi onore, e di ciò fanno bene.”

Così vidi adunar la bella scuola  
Di quel signor dell' altissimo canto,  
Che sovra gli altri com' aquila vola.

Da ch' ebber ragionato insieme alquanto,  
Volsersi a me con salutevol cenno:  
E 'l mio maestro sorrise di tanto:

E più d' onore ancora assai mi fenno:  
Ch' essi mi fecer della loro schiera,  
Sì ch' i' fui sesto tra cotanto senno.†

No sooner ceased the sound, than I beheld  
Four mighty spirits tow'ards us bend their steps,  
Of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad.

When thus my master kind began:—“Mark him  
Who in his right hand bears that falchion keen,  
The other three preceding as their lord.  
This is that Homer, of all bards supreme;

\* See Poetical Works, vol. i. p. 272.

† Canto iv. v. 83.

Flaccus the next, in satire's vein excelling;  
 The third is Naso; Lucan is the last.  
 Because they all that appellation own,  
 With which the voice singly accosted me,  
 Honouring they greet me thus, and well they judge."

So I beheld united the bright school  
 Of him, the monarch of sublimest song,  
 That o'er the others like an eagle soars.

When they together short discourse had held,  
 They turn'd to me, with salutation kind  
 Beck'ning me; at the which my master smil'd.  
 Nor was this all; but greater honour still  
 They gave me; for they made me of their tribe,  
 And I was sixth amid so learn'd a band.

CARY.

During the remainder of the fourteenth century, the name and the works of Homer became gradually more and more known in Italy by means of the advocacy of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and the Florentine professorship; and the study of Greek literature in general received an extraordinary impulse by the exertions of those illustrious men whom the Turkish conquests in the beginning of the fifteenth century drove as exiles to seek their bread in Christian lands. The principal of these settled in Italy, were honourably entertained in the courts of princes, and powerfully assisted the efforts of the first printers. Theodore Gaza, being an exile from Thessalonica, upon its capture by the Turks in 1429, established a school in Ferrara; Emmanuel Chrysoloras professed Greek at Venice about the same time; and Demetrius Chalcondylas, an Athenian, occupied the chair at Florence in 1479. The first edition of all the Homeric poems—that by the Nerli, at Florence, in the year 1488—was prepared by Chalcondylas, and has a long preface in Greek by him, in which he declares that no considerable work in Greek had been previously printed. The Latin version of the preceding century appears to have been lost. The earliest prose transla-

Theodore  
Gaza.

Chrysoloras.

Chalcondylas.

tion in that language now extant is that by Laurentius Valla, which was printed at Brescia in 1474, fourteen years before the Florence edition of the original text. Angelo Politian, one of the most brilliant intellects of that age, began a translation in Latin verse; but the work seems to have been abandoned. He speaks of this undertaking in the beginning of the well-known stanzas, said to have been composed at fourteen years of age:—

E se quassù la fama il ver rimbomba  
Che d' Ecuba la figlia, o sacro Achille,  
Poi che 'l corpo lasciasti, entro la tomba  
T' accenda ancor d' amorse faville;  
Lascia tacer un po' tua maggior tromba,  
*Ch' io fo squillar per l' Italiche ville.*

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that Politian, in his "Manto," an idyll in honour of Virgil, as the "Ambra" is of Homer, does not scruple to give the Greek poet a rival, if not a superior. Manto says,—

Euge, beate puer, sanguis meus; horreat ortus  
Græcia tota tuos, palmanique habitura secundam:  
Aspera, Arethusa suis, metuant et *Smyrna* coronis.

But the first thorough Zoilist, after the revival of Greek literature, was the elder Scaliger (Julius Caesar). He is not content with simply preferring Virgil, but illustrates the disparity between the poets by sundry uncourteous similes. He says that Homer is a country wench, Virgil a noble matron; the one as lead, the other as gold; the first a ballad-singer, the second a true and sublime poet; Homer a mere chaos, and Virgil the divinity which informed it with life and beauty. The fact is, that J. C. Scaliger, although a profound Latin grammarian, was incompetently versed in Greek, and was wholly possessed by a spirit of contradiction, extravagance, and conceit. His elaborate fable as to his descent from the princes of Verona shows the man in no stronger a light than many

of his literary preferences do the critic. Homer will not suffer much in being postponed to Virgil by one who thought the tragedies of Seneca superior to those of Euripides, and could find nothing in Catullus but coarseness and trifling.

As might be expected, almost every man of  
*Italians.* eminent poetic genius in Italy, has been an admirer of Homer. Tassoni is the only exception; and he admits that the beauty of the style and versification of the Iliad and Odyssey is such, that, like the Arabic of the Koran, it nearly conceals the numberless absurdities of the poetry itself. Tasso's opinion could not be doubted: he said, in words of epic tone, that no poetry came nearer to eternity than Homer's; he was more secure from just opposition and from carping criticism than the summit of Olympus from winds and tempests:—"Niuna poesia si accosta più dell' Omerica all' eternità; è più sicuro dalle giuste opposizioni e dalla maldicenza, che la sommità dell' Olimpo dai venti e dalle tempeste." In the controversy which arose upon the relative merits of Ariosto and Tasso, Homer was dragged in, as being supposed a pattern for the first in style and for the last in subject. Patrizio, a principal Aristotist, abused our old Greek unmercifully; and, adverting to Tasso's vindication, said, that the latter ought to pique himself much more upon not being like Homer—which was the fact—than for any supposed resemblance. And, in pointing out that the Jerusalem Delivered and the Iliad were not akin, Patrizio spoke the truth: for the rest, let him share the fame of Paul Beni and Benedict Fioretti, otherwise named Udeno Nisiely; the first of whom was a professor of eloquence at Padua, and exercised his craft in ten discourses, destined to prove that Homer was not only inferior to Tasso, *but even* to Ariosto, to whom, with the Greek, this learned Paduan assigned the last and lowest place amongst epic poets; and the second of whom called Homer the



“murderer of decorum,” the “destroyer of all costume,” the “most tedious of story-tellers,” who had “conducted genuine armies to death ;” whose *Iliad* was a “mirror of poetic faults,” and whose poetry in general was “an antipathy—un’ antipatia dell’ arte poetica.” To such incredible depths of folly and ineptitude may false and ungenial principles of criticism lead even men of learning and respectable talent !

The Zoilism of France at the period of the famous dispute at the end of the seventeenth century, was very bitter, but not so dull as that of Italy. It was natural in the French,—it exactly fell in with some of their strongest habits of mind, to turn into ridicule a body of poetry far too simple, and fiery, and true, to please the literary taste of that nation in the age of Louis the Fourteenth. The force and the spirit of Rabelais were dead and buried ; but French literature was never more distinguished for wit and elegance, and a certain tone of philosophy peculiar to itself, than at that time. Certainly, if Homer could be put out of countenance at all in Paris, the finished talents and the determined hostility of La Mothe, St. Evremond, Fontenelle, St. Hyacinthe, and Terrasson might be supposed sufficient for the purpose. We may readily enough allow that

“ Si Pergama dextris  
Exscindi possent, his, his excisa fuissent.”

The author of this literary war, though not the most celebrated combatant in it, was Perrault. His first onset was in a poem on the age of Louis the Fourteenth, and his second in a series of Dialogues in prose, in which he developed and justified the opinions he had previously made public. The immediate effect of this heretical proclamation was a tumult, and Perrault was overwhelmed in the scuffle. Boileau lashed him, Gaccon cudgelled him, Madame Dacier crushed him, and

the residue of life was quizzed out of him by Fraguier. The hostility was internecine, and the weapons of fight endless. Fraguier, an excellent Latinist, had recourse to some iambics, which would not have discredited either Catullus or Martial :—

“ Perralte noster, delicatus es nimis:  
 Tibi videtur esse rus merum Plato;  
 Tibi Catullus ille non habet salem;  
 Divinum Homerum vatem e trivio æstimas;  
 Etiam in Marone nauseare diceris:  
 Solos Cotinos et Capellanos legis:  
 Perralte noster, delicatus es nimis.”

Boileau's epigram is better known :—

“ Clio vint l'autre jour se plaindre au dieu des vers,  
 Qu'en certain lieu de l'univers,  
 On traitait d'auteurs froids, de poètes stériles,  
 Les Homères et les Virgiles.  
 ‘ Cela ne saurait être, on s'est moqué de vous,’  
 Reprit Apollon en courroux;  
 ‘ Où peut-on avoir dit une telle infamie?  
 Est ce chez les Hurons, chez les Topinambous? ’—  
 ‘ C'est à Paris.’—‘ C'est donc dans l'hôpital des fous? ’—  
 ‘ Non, c'est au Louvre, en pleine académie.’ ”

Fénélon also added the weight of his name to the orthodox side. But it seems to me that in this literary scuffle the Zoilists had the best of it; they are, at least, amusing, and expose the dull and inapplicable criticisms of their opponents with wit and force. They are in the right relatively to the errors which they attacked; but positively, and in the abstract, both parties were equally in the wrong. Throughout the whole controversy there is not a glimpse of true principles of judgment: what Homer really is, was never once understood on either side: the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are defended and assailed upon grounds and for qualities which neither do nor could exist, and the non-existence of which ought to have been stated and admitted in the very

outset. But, of course, when the *Iliad* was vindicated upon the authority and model of the *Æneid*, and even of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, there could be no difficulty in showing that the *Iliad* was indefensible. The Zoilists were consistent; Madame Dacier was not; she was always putting herself in a succession of false positions, and appealing to rules and standards which, being totally incongruous, convicted her of error. Yet she had a feeling, a sense, of the greatness of the Homeric poetry, which her witty enemies had not; she knew that the *Iliad* was something above the best piece of Racine, although she could not truly explain why. Madame Dacier was not so clever as many of those who delighted in tormenting her; but, with all her pedantry and general clumsiness, she possessed a right-mindedness towards the really beautiful, which was then and still is rare in France. This celebrated woman, having once been over-praised, has, for many years, been under-rated; and, as matters now stand with us in England, when so many clever girls and matrons publish verses, the prevailing tone of which is as little moral as it is intellectual, it may not be amiss to call attention to the name of a learned woman, and to suggest the acquisition of sound scholarship, and a power of perusing the great authors of Greece and Rome, as an object of worthier and more preferable ambition to our literary countrywomen than figuring in an annual or writing in magazines.

Our English squabble which followed had, in fact, no Zoilism in it, and the wits were on the English. side of the ancients. The incomparable learning and sagacity of Bentley obtained an acknowledged triumph in the immediate and original dispute—the genuineness of the *Epistles of Phalaris*; and inimitable as is the humour of invention of the *Battle of the Books*, the hostile wit of Swift, Pope, and Arbuthnot, took no effect on the great and eccentric object of their attacks.

The French question never arose, but in France it never ceased to the end of the last century. Fontenelle, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Helvetius, Marmontel, Mercier, and others of less note, in turn broke a lance in this adventure, with various skill and vigour, but with nearly equal insensibility to the precise truth.

Cesarotti  
and modern  
Zoilism.

In the vast edition of the *Iliad* by Cesarotti—a thorough Frenchman in everything but birth—for his very Italian is French—the essence of the opinions of all these writers upon the question, and his own hearty assent to their principles of criticism, may be found declared in methodical order. The book might be used as a touchstone to try the critical taste of young men leaving school or college; and Quintilian's rule might be applied, with a slight alteration:—"Ille se in poesi neque profecisse neque profuturum sciat, cui Cesarottus placebit." It is, of course, impossible for me to give even the most condensed summary of the arguments of this long train of writers; but, as I have expressed my disapprobation—I may own, my contempt—for them as critics on Homer so strongly, it will be proper to cite a few of the remarks which have proceeded from them. "Ex uno disce omnes"—was never more strictly true than in this case. Whoever could honestly make one such objection as those I shall quote, could hardly have possessed a single principle of sane judgment upon any part of the Homeric poetry. Those who have ever taken the trouble to read the chief authors against Homer, or even looked at the notice of them in Cesarotti, will acquit me of any malice in the selection of the following specimens. *Divitias miseras!*—But I will not look beyond the first two books of the *Iliad*.

1. ἦτοι ὃγ' ὡς εἰπὼν κατ' ἄρ' ἔζητο τοῖσι δ' ἀνέστη  
ἦρωες Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρυκρείων Ἀγαμέμνων. *Il. A. I.* 101.

“The manner in which Homer introduces and con-

nects his speeches, is so languid and so uniform, that it frequently injures the effect of the passage. His manner always is—*such a one said, such a one answered*; and, to complete the languor and sameness, he denotes the speakers not only by their names, but also by long epithets, already a thousand times repeated, which frequently have no sort of relation to the present action, nor to the conduct of the character, and sometimes are openly inconsistent with either. I know not whether his language was actually deficient in such phrases as these—*said he—replied Agamemnon—interrupted Achilles*, and so on; but, be it the defect of the poet, or his language, the want of them in the *Iliad* is not the less perceptible. What a difference, for example, there is between the two following manners of connecting one speech with another!—*Agamemnon, the king of men, spake thus, and would have continued, when the swift-footed Achilles interrupted him in these words, ‘Proud son of Atreus, &c.’* and thus, *‘Proud son of Atreus!’ interrupted Achilles, &c.* The former is Homer’s favourite; the latter was after his time so commonly used, that to adopt it now is no longer a merit, although it is lively and agreeable.”—*La Mothe*.

“I add, that the slowness of Homer is often in contrast with the character of his heroes. In consequence of the poet’s languid expression and otiose phrases, his heroes are never in a hurry, even in moments of the greatest impetus. As here, for instance, after Chalcas has spoken, Homer not only tells us that he *has* spoken, but also that he has returned to his rest; and, in the meantime, Agamemnon, furious as he is presently represented to be, remains quietly waiting till the prophet shall have seated himself at his ease, and then, in turn, in great tranquillity, himself rises. Ought not the poet to have marked, by the quickness of the phrase, the impatience of the king, as he afterwards admirably expresses his rage?”—*Cesarotti*.

2. οὐ γὰρ πῶποτ' ἐμὰς βούς ἤλασαν. *Ib.* 154.

“Neither had the Atridae come to Troy to revenge the plunder of their lands, or the abduction of their cattle, but the rape of Helen. Hence, to hit the mark, Achilles ought to have expressed himself as he does in Racine :—

‘ Et jamais dans Larisse un lâche ravisseur  
Me vint-il enlever ou ma femme ou ma sœur.’ ”  
—*Terrasson.*

3. ἐπειὴ πολὺ φέρτερόν ἐστιν,  
οἷκαδ' ἴμεν σὺν νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν. *Ib.* 169.

“Was this the place to consider whether the ships were curved or oblong?”—*Cesarotti.*

4. αἶεὶ γὰρ τοι ἔρις τε, φίλη, πόλεμοί τε, μάχαι τέ. *Ib.* 177.

“This reproof is absurd in the mouth of Agamemnon. Could there be anything more advantageous to the captain of the army against Troy than a man who breathed nothing but wars and conflicts?”—*Terrasson.*

5. αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεύς  
Δακρύσας. *Ib.* 348.

“The tears of Achilles seem to be equally wrong, whether we consider his personal character, or the occasion of his shedding them. In fact, who could conceive that a man who acknowledged no right but might, would betake himself to weep for an affront which he ought naturally to have washed out in blood? This is the disposition which Racine gives to the same personage in his *Iphigenia* :—

‘ Si de sang et de morts le ciel est affamé,  
Jamais de plus de sang ses autels n'ont fumé.’

Achilles is less insolent in the modern poet, but infinitely more terrible.”—*Terrasson.*



“Achilles, in this place, is like a great lubberly child, who cries to his mamma for a doll which has been taken from him.”—*Bayle, and the Academy Della Crusca.*

6. τῇ σ' ὁῖω κατανεῦσαι ἐτήτυμον. *Ib.* 558.

“Jupiter was, therefore, very ill advised in making such a noise, when he wished to be secret. Was it not evident that the gods would inquire the cause of the trembling of Olympus, or could Juno be long in finding it out?”—*Cesarotti.*

7. Δία δ' οὐκ ἔχε νήδυμος ὕπνος. *B'. II.* 2.

“In the end of the preceding book, we read that Jupiter went to bed and slept. It must be supposed, therefore, that he had only a nap, whilst the other gods slept soundly.”—*Cesarotti.*

8. εἴτ' ἂν σε μελίφρων ὕπνος ἀνήη. *Ib.* 34.

“Μελίφρων—a beautiful epithet; but was this the place to give it to Agamemnon's sleep?”—*Cesarotti.*

9. Ἦώς μὲν ἔα θεὰ προσεξήσατο μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον,  
Ζηνὶ φάως ἐρέουσα καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισι. *Ib.* 48.

“So that, if Aurora had not had the charity to apprise him of the fact, good father Jupiter would have remained in the dark to all eternity! What a conception of a divinity! The judicious Virgil, although he so often described Aurora, never let slip such an expression.”—*Cesarotti.*

10. κήρυξ Εὐρυεάτης Ἰθακήσιος, ὅς οἱ ὑπῆδει. *Ib.* 184.

“Truly a very interesting circumstance!”—*Terrasson*.

11. Θερσίτ' ἀκριτόμυθε, κ. τ. λ. *Ib.* 246.

“Half of this speech should have been omitted. It is full of trash, ill-connected, and stuffed with repetitions and ambiguities. The wise Ulysses, upon this occasion, does himself less honour than Thersites; his best eloquence lies in his staff.”—*Cesarotti*.

12. ἥντε βοῦς ἀγέληφι μέγ' ἔξοχος ἔπλετο πάντων  
ταῦρος *Ib.* 480.

“After three of the most powerful divinities had been laid under contribution to form the portrait of Agamemnon, who could have imagined that a bull would make his appearance to finish it?”—*Cesarotti*.

13. τῷ δ' ἅμα νῆες ἔποντο δωδέκα μιλτοπάρηοι. *Ib.* 637.

“Heaven be praised that at length we see some ships that are not black. The custom of painting ships red was very ancient, according to Herodotus, and appears to have ceased in his time. Virgil has ‘pictasque innare carinas.’ But what shall we say of the cheeks of a ship? Would not such an expression as this, in an author of the sixteenth century, have thrown a delicate Italian into convulsions? and would not these rouged cheeks have appeared to belong rather to Madame X. or Miss Y., than to a ship?”—*Cesarotti*.

14. Λοκρῶν δ' ἡγεμόνευεν Ὀϊλῆος παχὺς Ἀΐας,  
μεΐων, ὅτι τόσος γε, ὅσος Τελαμώνιος Ἀΐας, κ. τ. λ.  
*Ib.* 527.

“Zenodotus and other ancient critics thought the three lines beginning with μεΐων, κ. τ. λ. spurious, because of the usage of the word Πανέλληνες. I wish

rather to be able to think them inserted on account of the insufferable reiteration of the littleness of Ajax's stature. But the truth is, he who should take from Homer all his *tautologies*, his *superfluities*, and his *absurdities*, would very soon reduce the 'Great Iliad' to the 'Little Iliad.'"—*Cesarotti*.

Such morsels of criticism as these are not selected here as being anywise particularly noticeable in the writings of the authors in question, but simply because they are short, and capable of being detached. The shallowness, the conceit, the unfairness, the want of sense and imagination, in one word, the Zoilism, of La Mothe, Terrasson, and Cesarotti, are much more conspicuous in their more elaborate reasonings upon the policy and morality of the sayings and doings of the heroes of the Iliad. With reference to all these, the *Æneid*, or the *Jerusalem Delivered*, or even, in the case of some of the later amongst this school, the *Henriade*—yes! the *Henriade* of M. de Voltaire—is undoubtedly set up as the standard of perfection; the antiquity, the peculiarity, of the Homeric poetry is seldom mentioned—never considered; and instead of treating it, with Aristotle, as authority for all other heroic verse, they bring it to the bar of Latin, Italian, and modern French epic poems, and pronounce everything that would be incongruous in those examples a fault in Homer. They, one and all, deal with this wonderful production of human genius as if they were the wise men of Greece cross-examining a Scythian; their tone is that of men whose superiority to the subject of their criticism is quite unquestionable; Homer is evidently to them the drunken savage which Shakspeare was to Voltaire. So completely had Cesarotti imbibed this feeling, that he constantly refers to his own Italian version as constituting a poem of greater excellence than the Greek. The following phrases are to be found in almost every page:—A'. 177. "La traduzione poetica

diede al sentimento un tornio *più conveniente*.—A'. 200. La traduzione Italiana *lera ogni equivoco*.—A'. 366. La traduzione Italiana cercò di *medicar* questo luogo con un tratto, s' io non erro, caratteristico e conveniente alla passione d' un uomo indispettivo, e che si pasce del suo dispetto.—A'. 415. Questo voto è ben meschino. Nella T. P. si cercò di concepire il voto della Dea in un modo *più espressamente adattato* alla situazione d' Achille, e alle disposizioni del cuor materno.—A'. 586. Nella V. P. si cercò d'esser *un po' meno sgraziato consolatore* del zoppo fabbro dell' Olimpo.—B'. 75. Nella T. P. s' è cercato di supplire a questa mancanza.—B'. 83. La T. P. cercò di *animar questo luogo con qualche tratto più vivo*.—B'. 137. Nella T. P. si è dato un giro affatto diverso a questo tocco, e s' io non erro, *il solo che potesse far buon effetto*." But enough of this; and what has been here said upon this subject would have been too much, if it were not to be hoped that sounder and more elevated principles of criticism are beginning slowly, but surely, to win their way amongst literary men, and that an exposure of the extravagance of a false system may help to facilitate their progress and general dissemination.

As for Homer,—having, happily for us, weathered the storms of religious zeal which might have destroyed him, he has not suffered much from the ignobler, but less dangerous, persecution of Zoilus and his race. Homer will have no temples, nor games, nor sacrifices in Christendom; but his statue is yet to be seen in the palaces of kings, and his name will remain in honour among the nations to the world's end. He stands, by prescription, alone and aloof on Parnassus, where it is not possible *now* that any human genius should stand with him—the Father and the Prince of all heroic poets—the boast and the glory of his own Greece, and the love and the admiration of all that is true and sound-hearted in mankind.

## THE TROJAN CONTROVERSY.

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AN imperfect collection of the works which have appeared in England alone, on the subject of the Troad and the Trojan war, fills three quarto volumes in our common libraries. Were the German publications to be added, the mighty mass would be more than doubled; and France and Italy, although no longer the favourite abodes of ancient classical learning, have not been entirely without their voice in the dispute. This controversy as to the historical character of the war, and the existence and precise situation of Troy, like that concerning the individuality of Homer, is not of so modern a date as is generally supposed. Stesichorus, a native of Himera in Sicily, who was born B. C. 632, and died B. C. 556, was evidently making use of a received tradition when, in his *Palinodia* to Helen, he declared that there was no truth in the common story of her elopement or residence in Troy :—

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος·——  
οὐ γὰρ ἔβας ἐν  
νηυσὶν εὐστέλμοις, οὐδ' ἵκεο πέρασμα Τροιάς.

“ For in the well-built ships thou didst not leave our clime,  
Nor e'er, in truth, arrive the towers of Troy sublime.”

He afterwards accounts for the mistake, by stating that the Trojans, in fact, carried off a mere counterfeit image of the heroine :—

Τρῶες οἱ τὸτ' ἴσαν, Ἑλένης εἰδῶλον ἔχοντες.

Euripides, in two of his plays—*Electra* and *Helena*—adopts what Plato, in the ninth book of his *Republic*, seems to consider the invention of the lyric poet. In the first, the Dioscuri, the beatified brothers of Helen, appear to Orestes and Electra, and state the fact, in some detail, thus:—

μητέρα δὲ τὴν σὴν, ἄρτι Ναυπλίαν παρῶν  
 Μενέλαος, ἐξ οὗ Τρωϊκὴν εἶλε χθόνα,  
 Ἑλένη τε θάψει· Πρωτέως γὰρ ἐκ δόμων  
 ἔκει λιποῦσ' Αἴγυπτον· οὐδ' ἦλθε Φρύγας.  
 Ζεὺς δ', ὥς ἔρις γένοιτο καὶ φόνος βροτῶν,  
 εἶδωλον Ἑλένης ἐξέπεμψ' εἰς Ἴλιον.\*

“She never went to Troy; but Jupiter sent an image of her instead, *in order that a quarrel might arise and human slaughter ensue.*” I think Terrasson must have admitted that there is nothing in the *Iliad* worse than this.

The *Helena* is entirely founded upon this anti-Homeric version of the matter. Helen, in Egypt, cannot persuade Menelaus to recognize her, until a messenger comes in and relates the vanishing of the false heroine, who had declared her mission ended. The real Helen says:—

Οὐκ ἦλθον εἰς γῆν Τρωάδ', ἀλλ' εἶδωλον ἦν.

The sham Helen explains the mystery in these words:—

ὦ ταλαίπωροι Φρύγες,  
 πάντες τ' Ἀχαιοί, δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις  
 ἀπαῖσις Ἦρας μηχαναῖς ἐθνήσκετε,  
 δοκοῦντες Ἑλένην, οὐκ ἔχοντ' ἔχειν Πάριν.  
 ἐγὼ δ', ἐπειδὴ χρόνον ἔμειν', ὅσον μ' ἔχρῃν,  
 τὸ μῆρσιμον σῶσασα, πατέρ' εἰς οὐρανὸν



ἄπειμι φήμας δ' ἡ τάλαινα Τυνδαρίς,  
ἄλλως κακὰς ἤκουσεν, οὐδὲν αἰτία.\*

But Herodotus is the first Greek writer whose Opinion of Herodotus. own serious opinion is clearly delivered against the authenticity of the Homeric account. The reader should peruse what this charming and intelligent author says in the Euterpe, from section 112 to 120 inclusively. It may be stated very shortly thus:—that Proteus was king of Egypt, and lived at Memphis; that Paris, having carried off Helen from Sparta, was, in his return, driven by tempest to the Canopic, or westernmost, mouth of the Nile; that his slaves withdrew themselves to the protection of the temple of Hercules in that place, and accused Paris of his rape of the wife of Menelaus; that Thonis, the governor of the place, by the orders of Proteus, sent Paris to Memphis, together with Helen, and all his treasures; that Proteus, upon convicting Paris of this crime, ordered him and his companions to leave the country in three days' time, but detained Helen and the treasure till Menelaus should come or send to claim them. Herodotus conceives that this account was known to Homer, but that it was not so well suited to the purposes of his poetry as the other story; and he cites, as proofs of this supposition, a passage in the Iliad (Ζ'. vi. 289), in which Paris is said to have touched at Sidon, in his way back to Troy with Helen; and the passages in the Odyssey (Δ'. iv. 227–351), in which Helen is mentioned to have received drugs from the wife of Thonis, and Menelaus speaks of his own detention in Egypt. Hence he argues, that the Cypriac verses could not be Homer's, because they made it out that Paris brought Helen from Sparta to Troy in three days, with a fair wind. He proceeds to say that, according to the Egyptian account, the Trojans had

\* v. 614.

from the beginning sworn that neither Helen nor the treasures were within the walls, but were both in Egypt; that the Greeks, disbelieving this, continued the war till the capture of the city, when, discovering it to be true, they sent Menelaus himself to recover them from Proteus; that Menelaus sailed up the river to Memphis, was received with great hospitality, and had his wife and property restored to him; but that, committing some outrages on the coast, whilst waiting for a wind, he was obliged to fly as well as he could. The historian then adds reasons for considering the Egyptian account the true one; amongst the rest, that it is not probable, or in any respect credible, that Priam, or Hector, or the other Trojans, would have risked the destruction of their city and kingdom merely to indulge the passion of Paris, if, in fact, it had been in their power to have restored Helen to the Greeks; and he sets it down as a signal instance of the sweeping punishments inflicted by the gods upon great offences committed by men.

It seems to have been a favourite point with the Spartans to maintain the chastity of Helen, to whom they erected a temple at Therapnæ, in which matrons were accustomed to offer prayers for the gift of beauty to their daughters. The elegant Epithalamium  
Theocritus. by Theocritus—

Ἐν ποτ' ἄρα Σπάρτα, ξανθότριχι παρ Μενελάω—*ν. τ. λ.*

in which there are strong marks of an acquaintance with the Song of Solomon, is conceived in a tone evidently intended to flatter this local feeling; and in the

Encomium of Isocrates, Helen is celebrated as  
Isocrates. divine, and her abductions by Theseus and Paris are represented as appointed acknowledgments of her superhuman beauty. In accordance, also, with this  
Dion Chrysostom. conception of her character, Dion Chrysostom, at the end of the first century, addressed his

Oration to the inhabitants of the then existing Ilium, or Pagus Iliensium, to prove that Troy never had been taken by the Greeks; and that Helen was, in the first instance, lawfully married to Paris with the consent of her father. This piece, like almost everything of Dion's, is beautifully written, and will amply repay a diligent perusal. The argument is mainly founded on the objections taken by Herodotus; but it is developed with great force, and supported with exquisite ingenuity by the evidence of passages from the Iliad itself.

The numerous writers of antiquity who conceived the Iliad and the Odyssey, especially the former, to be wholly or in part allegorical, must, of course, to a certain extent have impeached the historical character of those poems; but Metrodorus, a native of Lampsacus, and consequently a neighbour of the Trojan state, and Anaxagoras, the preceptor of Socrates, are particularly mentioned as having denied any authority whatever to the common story of the war.\* Some of the extravagances of the allegorists of ancient and modern times will be mentioned hereafter: but even as to Thucydides, whose quotations and references have <sup>Thucydides.</sup> perhaps imparted more historical weight to Homer than any other testimony or circumstance whatever, it is observable that he guards his allegations of the poet's authority with such cautious phrases as the following:—"As Homer has proved, *if any one will take him for a witness*"—ἐἴ τῳ ἱκανὸς τετραχηλῶσαι—and "this appears in Homer's poetry, *if here again, in a matter of this sort, we ought to attach any weight to such testimony*"—ἐἴ τι γρηῃ πανταῦθα πιστεύειν.† But, although sceptical remarks upon the Homeric or common account of the causes, conduct, and termination of the Trojan war, are to be found scattered over the ancient literature, it is due to Bryant to allow him the credit of going further than any preceding writer in his theory on the subject. It

\* Diog. Laert. II. 86.

† A'. I. 9, 10.

Bryant. would greatly exceed the narrow limits of this work, if I were to give even a summary of the grounds upon which, in his several publications, in answer to M. Le Chevalier, Mr. Morritt, and the British Critic, and otherwise, Bryant laboured to annihilate the popular opinion, and to build up a new and very strange one of his own. In two words, he maintained that no such city as Troy had ever existed in that district called the Troad, nor any such war as that called the Trojan war ever taken place in Greek history; but he maintained the probability that the Troy secretly intended was the town of that name on the right bank of the Nile, opposite to the ancient Memphis, and that Homer, being of Egyptian extraction, had transferred the locality of a war which had actually taken place at the Egyptian Troy to the shores of the Ægean, and arrayed it in Grecian costume and circumstance, for the purpose of flattering his fellow-countrymen. He distinguished, therefore, between the authenticity of the city and the war, as a Phrygian city and a Greek war, both of which he denied, and the Homeric application of an Egyptian city and war of the same name to Phrygia and Greece, which he admitted.

Helen's age. Bryant calculates that Helen must have been one hundred and four years old in the last year of the war, as thus:—Her twin brothers were in full manhood (twenty-five) in the Argonautic expedition; and Scaliger and Petavius both reckon an interval of seventy-nine years to the capture of Troy. Telemachus sees her ten years afterwards at Sparta, and still as beautiful as ever, which Bryant cannot understand, according to the analogy of modern ladies. Indeed, the Homeric text itself gives her a most perdurable beauty of person; for, as she was a married woman and a mother when she left Sparta with Paris, and had been twenty years absent in the last year of the war (Il. xxiv. 768), and Telemachus sees her ten years afterwards, it is difficult to conceive her less than forty-

eight or fifty years of age at the latter period. It must be admitted, that Bryant is very successful in proving the Homeric Helen an old woman, according to our present scale of age in women; although he does not take into account the material circumstance of her divine origin and her peculiar destiny, and the consequent probability of her possessing an immortal complexion. He further urges, with much force, the disproportion between the number of the Greeks in the Homeric Catalogue and the greatest efforts made by the nation in more civilized times. The Catalogue reckons upwards of 100,000 soldiers. At Marathon there were 10,000, and at Plataea 72,500, without the Helots. At Artemisium there were 271 ships, and at Salamis 378. In the Catalogue there are nearly 1200. In this part of his argument Bryant is very strong; and puts the improbability of such a union of forces, from all the remote tribes of Greek blood, in such a quarrel, in a very imposing light.

But, when he comes to attack Le Chevalier's clear and irrefragable attribution of the plain <sup>The Troad.</sup> eastward of, or within, the promontory of Sigæum (*Yenisheli*), as the intended scene of the Iliad, he is not so fortunate. He certainly shows that the distance between the eminence behind Bunárbachi (the *Spring-head*), Le Chevalier's site of Troy, and the present line of coast, is so great—between eleven and twelve miles—that the movements of the combatants in several of the Homeric days could not by any possibility be reconciled with it. In the day in which Patroclus is killed, the Greeks march twice to the walls of Troy, and are twice beaten back—a space of near fifty miles. And he cites the lines in the 20th book of the Iliad,—

"Ιλίου ἱρὴ

ἐν πεδίῳ πεπόλιστο.\*

\* v. 216.

But notwithstanding these and many other incongruities ingeniously pointed out, I cannot doubt that Le Chevalier, Morritt, Gell, Hamilton, Colonel Leake, and indeed almost all modern travellers, are right in thinking, that the intended Troad of the Iliad is that district which is now commonly so called; although, as to the site of the poetical city of Troy, it seems to me that nothing can be made out. Wherever you fix, some one difficulty or other occurs, and the adoption of another site only produces a new set of objections. Bryant's own conjecture is, that the true Troad is south of Sigæum, and somewhere not far from the ruins of Alexandria Troas, now Eski Stamboul; and he alleges the authority of Virgil—

*Est in conspectu Tenedos ;*

which is true, if spoken from that part of the coast, but Tenedos can only be seen very indistinctly, if at all, from any part of the plain within the promontory of *Yenishehr*. He also quotes from Quintus Smyrnaeus the description of the Calydnæ Insulæ, which are close to Tenedos—

ἦν τε Καλύδην  
 λαοὶ μικλήσκουσιν, ἔσω ἁλὸς, ἀντία Τροίης.\*

In a matter of this description, it is of course impossible to arrive at anything more than probability. The whole subject is treated in a clear and concise way by Colonel Leake, in his *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor*, published in 1824, pp. 276–306; and his map or sketch, which, by permission, is prefixed to this volume, will explain this eminent geographer's distribution of the ancient and modern localities of this celebrated district; especially as to the identity and course of the Scamander, upon which point Colonel Leake has an original con-



jecture, and also as to the alteration of the coast itself. One of the most difficult things to understand is, how so great an accretion of land can have taken place between the Sigæum and Rhæteum, as is supposed by the modern travellers, against the rapid current of the Hellespont. And even since Colonel Leake has declared himself unequivocally of opinion that such an accretion has taken place, I have heard some very intelligent observers of the spot declare it to be, according to their judgment, impossible, although it was not denied that a similar accretion had taken place at the mouth of the Mæander and other rivers on the southern coast, not subject to the constant action of so strong a current. At the same time it must be admitted, that there is one passage in the 14th book of the *Iliad*, which seems to indicate in the poet's mind the picture of a bay, or at least some tract of shore, confined between two projecting points:—

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ', εὐρύς περ ἔων, ἔδυνήσατο πᾶσαι  
 αἰγιαλὸς νῆας χαδέειν· στείνοντο δὲ λαοί·  
 τῷ ἔα προκρύσσας ἔρυσαν, καὶ πλῆσαν ἀπάσης  
 ἡϊόνος στόμα μακρὸν, ὅσον συνέεργαθον ἄνθρωποι.\*

“For the shore, although wide, could not contain all the ships, and the people were crowded. Wherefore they drew up the vessels in files, ladder-wise, and filled the whole opening of the beach, as much as is confined between the headlands.”

With regard to the difficulty which has sometimes been raised upon Homer's *broad Helles-* Hellespont.  
 pont, it seems to me a satisfactory answer that the poet evidently treats it as a river running into the *Ægean*. The accurate epithet ἀγᾶλλος, vehemently flowing, corresponds with this supposition. As to the notion that πλατὺς is used in this place for *salt*, it is astonishing to me that any scholar can have countenanced such a forced

and most unnecessary interpretation. Surely, in a case like this, Virgil may be taken as a decisive commentator, in his evident imitation :—

——— Sigæa igni freta *lata* relucens.\*

Remarks.

When Cæsar, in Lucan, visited the Troad, he found the very ruins of the Homeric monuments extinct, and crossed the bed of the Scamander himself, without knowing it ;—

Inscius in sicco serpentem gramine rivum  
Transierat qui Xanthus erat.†

I would not say that some of our modern travellers have in their enthusiasm discovered a Scamander where it never was before ; but, repeating my belief, that the intended scene of the Iliad is the tract lying within Cape Yenishehr, I would humbly suggest, upon general principles of criticism, that the credit of Homer is not materially concerned in such a minute correspondence of poetical description or allusion with the actual localities, as most of the modern travellers in, and writers on, the Troad labour to establish. If the Iliad be conceived as a poem composed and revised by an individual author, it would surely be allowable in him to add foam to his river, trees to his mountain, extent to his plain, and magnificence to his town. He might even create monuments and give them names, if dramatic probability authorised the invention. Does any one go about to identify all Tasso's descriptions with the topography of the Holy Land, so much more deeply marked and better known ? or, if any traveller were to calculate on the shade of one of the Italian poet's woods in the bare

\* Æn. II. v. 312. I was greatly surprised to see that the late excellent Bishop Sandford was inclined to translate *σάλτις*; salt in this passage.—*Life*, vol. i.

† Phars. ix. 974.

desert, could he much complain of our laughing at his surprise at not finding it? But, to those who fancy that they perceive the operation of more hands than one in this marvellous poem, these petty discrepancies of place and quality seem a natural consequence, and a probable proof of their theory. The city in the plain, and the city on the hill; the river clear, and the river turbid, and even the river running backwards; such small matters as these give them no difficulty to digest. The general harmony satisfies their ear, and they are not careful to ascertain whether every semitone be true to rule or not. Yet these remarks are not made in a spirit of banter on the local researches of our modern travellers in the Troad. Those travellers have done much good to classical literature, and have incidentally contributed largely to the better understanding of the Homeric text. Nor will I join with Lord Byron in calling Jacob Bryant a blackguard for the most extravagant of his doubts. That venerable man was a ripe scholar; he pursued an unbeaten track without the help of any previous traveller's guidance; and what wonder is it, if, in opening out many unknown paths, and setting up directing marks for others, he sometimes fell into pits and quicksands himself? *Mole sua stat.*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ILIAD.

Antiquity  
of the Iliad.

It may perhaps be confidently said, that the Iliad is, with the exception of the Pentateuch, and some other books of the Old Testament, the most ancient composition known. There seems to be good proof that it is older than the Odyssey, older than Hesiod, and older than the other poems existing amongst the ancients, and by them ascribed to Orpheus and Musæus, and which were probably, for the most part, produced during the interval between the Homeric age and the dynasty of Pisistratus; an interval of which we can learn little from history, and the obscurity of which seems in some sort to be aggravated by contrast with the light with which it is bounded. The splendour of Homer is at the beginning and the end of this interval; and the two bright points of the composition and the collective publication of the Iliad define, but they do not measure, the length, the depth, or the breadth of the historic darkness between them.

Spirit in  
which the  
Iliad should  
be read.

Being, then, so ancient a book, it should be read with patience and a simple mind. Nay, more—we should approach it with something of the kind of reverence which we yield to the Hebrew Genesis, and be perpetually familiar with its contents, as with the secular Bible of mankind. So vivid are the rays which flow from this globe of light, and so strong its power of attraction, that we neither see nor measure the thousands of years which have

rolled away since its creation and to-day—we forget the extreme antiquity in the uncommon luminousness of Homer, and almost believe that the *Iliad*, like the Bible, is collateral with all time, is for now and for ever. But this impression is an effect of first-rate genius, guided and strengthened by nature and good sense, which does not render it the less necessary for sound criticism to bear constantly in mind the date and the peculiar circumstances of the probable composition of this wonderful poem.

The manners of the *Iliad* are the manners of the patriarchal and early ages of the East. Manners. The chief differences arise from a different religion and a more maritime situation. Very far removed from the savage state on the one hand, and equally distant from the artificial condition of an extended commerce and a manufacturing population on the other, the spirit and habitudes of the two modes of society are almost identical. The Hero and the Patriarch are substantially coeval; but the first wanders in twilight, the last stands in the eye of Heaven. When three men appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, brought them in, directed Sarah to make bread, fetched from the herd himself a calf tender and good, dressed it, and set it before them;<sup>1</sup> when Ajax, Ulysses, and Phœnix stand before Achilles, he rushes forth to greet them, brings them into the tent, directs Patroclus to mix the wine, cuts up the meat, dresses it, and sets it before the ambassadors.<sup>2</sup> The son of Peleus sits down to eat,<sup>3</sup> and the sons of Jacob sat also before Joseph;<sup>4</sup> the practice of reclining at meals, which afterwards became universal, was unknown to either. Agamemnon offers to give one of his daughters in marriage to Achilles, without exacting

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, xviii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *l'*. IX. 193.

<sup>3</sup> *l'*. IX. 218.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis, xliii. 33.

a dowry from him,<sup>1</sup> implying thereby a custom, the reverse of which prevailed subsequently ; so Abraham's servant gave presents to Rebekah ;<sup>2</sup> Shechem promised a dowry and gift to Jacob for his daughter Dinah,<sup>3</sup> and in after times Saul said he did not desire any dowry from David for Michal.<sup>4</sup> Rachel, the daughter of Laban, a great man, kept her father's sheep ;<sup>5</sup> the seven daughters of Reuel, the priest of Midian, watered their father's flock ;<sup>6</sup> and Saul was coming after the herd out of the field, when they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh ;<sup>7</sup> so Bucolion, the son of Laomedon, was a shepherd ;<sup>8</sup> Antiphus, the son of Priam, kept sheep in the valleys of Ida,<sup>9</sup> and Æneas himself abandoned his herds on the same mountain at the sight of Achilles.<sup>10</sup>

Similarity of  
Manners.

These are some instances in striking particulars of the similarity, or rather the identity, of the manners of the Iliad and of the early ages in Asia ; but, beside these, there are many others as remarkable, and indeed parallelisms of thought and of imagery occur in almost every page of the Greek and Hebrew writers. To sacrifice with unwashed hands is unlawful ;<sup>11</sup> manslaughter is redeemable by exile and a fine ;<sup>12</sup> and in computing time the third or any future day is always reckoned inclusively.<sup>13</sup> A new-born child is said to fall between the feet of its mother ;<sup>14</sup> Hector sacrificed to Jupiter on the summit of Ida ;<sup>15</sup> stoning seems to have been the Trojan punishment for

<sup>1</sup> 1'. IX. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis, xxxiv. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis, xxix. 6.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel, xi. 5.

<sup>5</sup> 1'. XI. 106.

<sup>6</sup> 1'. VI. 265.

<sup>7</sup> 1'. IX. 628.

<sup>8</sup> 1'. IX. 363.

<sup>9</sup> 1'. XIX. 110.

<sup>10</sup> X'. XXII. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis, xxiv. 22.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel, xviii. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus, ii. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Z'. VI. 25.

<sup>10</sup> T'. XX. 91.

with Exodus, xxi. 20.

— Numbers, xxxv. 6.

— Leviticus, xii. 3.

— Deuteronomy, xxviii. 57.

— Deuteronomy, xii. 2.



adultery;<sup>1</sup> oxen are used to tread out corn;<sup>2</sup> female captives are selected as the peculiar prizes of the generals and chiefs;<sup>3</sup> and to lie without burial was the last and worst aggravation of defeat and death.<sup>4</sup> Instances of this sort might be multiplied to any extent, but the student will find it a pleasing and useful task to discover them for himself; and these will amply suffice to demonstrate the existence of that correspondence of spirit and manners between the Homeric and the early ages of the Bible history to which I have adverted. It is real and important; it affords a standard of the feelings with which we ought to read the *Iliad*, if we mean to read it as it deserves, and it explains and sets in the true point of view numberless passages, which the ignorance or frivolity of after times has charged with obscurity, meanness, or error. The Old Testament and the *Iliad* reflect light mutually, each on the other; and in respect of the poetry and the manners, at least, if not of the morals, so far as they can be distinguished, it may with great truth be said, that he who has the longest studied, and the most deeply imbibed, the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures, will the best understand, and the most lastingly appreciate, the Tale of Troy divine.

In respect of the Greeks themselves, however, we must look upon the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in general, as representing their age of chivalry. But it is a chivalry with little reverence for women, and no point of honour. It is, therefore, only analogous to the modern chivalry, and not like it in itself, although it bore the same relation to the historic and dramatic times of Greece, that the age of the Arthurs, Charlemagnes, and Cids of romance does to the modern nations of Europe. Morals.  
The morals and the manners of the Homeric

<sup>1</sup> Γ'. III. 57.

with John, viii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Γ'. XX. 495.

— Deuteronomy, xxv. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Α'. I. 118.

— Judges, v. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Α'. I. 4.

— Deuteronomy, xxviii. 26.

heroes cannot very easily be separated; they both belong to what may be called the second state or stage of a people, working out its own civilization under very favourable conditions of time, place, and physical temperament. The age of brutal violence has passed, or is passing away. The godless Polypheme and the monstrous Læstrygons are removed out of the pale of common social life; and a deep sense of the power and providence of the gods, and of the importance of religious worship, has become universal. The *δαισιδαίμονία*—the attribution of every great event to an agency more than human—is a primary characteristic of such an age, though liable to be overborne both for bad and for good by blind appetite or violent emotion. Thus an Ajax can offer violence to a virgin in the very temple of Minerva, and a Hector will defy all augury in the apparent service of his country. “Tell me not,” he cries to Polydamas. “tell me not of auguries! Let your birds fly to the east or to the west;—I care not in this cause; we obey the will of Jupiter, who rules over all, and

*εἷς οἶωνός ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.*

The one best omen is our country's cause.

Veracity, in the Homeric scheme, is rather an accident or token of power and boldness than a moral duty, and I do not in the least doubt that the reading which made Jupiter promise victory to Agamemnon, in the second book of the Iliad, and which attracted the censure of Plato, was the genuine one, and as ancient as any line in the poem. The *ὅλως ὄνειρος* was a lying spirit, which the father of gods and men had a supreme right to commission for the purpose of working out his ultimate will. It may be that the common interpretation is right of the two well-known lines\* in the famous speech of Achilles to the ambassadors,—

\* 1'. IX. 308.

ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Ἀτῆο πύλησιν,  
ὥς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,  
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.—POPE.

although it is equally pertinent to suppose Agamemnon to be meant by κείνος, and the lines to import an insinuation that all his fine offers and speeches were insincere. But Achilles, the hero of Force, as Vico says, could afford to speak his mind upon most occasions. If there had been any point unattainable by the sword, I doubt not that even Achilles would have lied for it as complacently as he dressed himself in a petticoat at the court of Lycomedes. To gain their point was the grand consideration with all Homeric heroes and divinities; honour, moral or personal, was out of the question; no such standard existed; and so close was the overruling agency of the gods, that success alone qualified the event, and justified the means. The

Disce, puer, virtutem ex me —  
Fortunam ex aliis —

was a distinction not yet taken; it required a stage, and a destiny, and a school of philosophy, to enable such subtleties to be appreciated. So, too, upon another subject, although the marriage of one man to one woman was firmly established, concubinage was without shame, and the tenderest language of respect might be applied to a mistress:—

ἢ μοῦνοι φιλέουσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων ἀνθρώπων  
Ἀτρεΐδαι; ἐπεὶ, ὅστις ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐχέφρων,  
τὴν αὐτοῦ φιλεῖ καὶ κήδεσται ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ τὴν  
ἐκ Δυμοῦ φίλεον, δουρικτητὴν περ ἔουσιν.\*

Of all mankind do Atreus' sons alone  
Cherish their wives? Each good man loves his own,

And keeps with care ; as from my soul was she,  
Slave though she were, loved tenderly by me.

In this respect, even Ulysses, with all his household virtues, was no Palmerin : Penelope does not seem to have expected it. He was a husband, as heroic, noble, and faithful as he could be drawn, without an infusion of Christianity or chivalry. Even Nestor is accommodated. As for robbery and plundering, though the honour of it is peculiar, the practice is not so, to the Homeric age : the Cid Campeador cheats a Jew,\* and many modern Cids have cheated and plundered more. But no hero in Homer picks a pocket, perhaps, amongst other reasons, because pockets were not. In short, ends, and not means, are the standards to which Homeric manners and morals are to be referred ; the hero aims highly and nobly, according even to our feelings of what is high and noble ; but he wins his object through courses upon which the knight, Christian or Moor, could not have entered without disgrace. They are heroes, and first-rate ones ; but they are the heroes of the oldest Paganism.

Mythology. In the Mythology also of the Iliad, purely Pagan as it is, we discover one important truth unconsciously involved, which was almost entirely lost from view amidst the nearly equal scepticism and credulity of subsequent ages. Zeus or Jupiter is popularly to be taken as omnipotent. No distinct empire is assigned to Fate or Fortune ; the will of the Father of gods and men is absolute and uncontrollable. This seems to be the true character of the Homeric deity, and it is very necessary that the student of Greek liter-

\* I suppose Rachel è Vidas to have been one—both from his being a man with so much ready cash, and from the expression of Martin Antolinez :—

Que non me descubrades à *Moros nin à Christianos.*

Poem. del Cid. v. 107.

ature should bear it constantly in mind. The glimpses of preceding dynasties on Olympus, and the intimations of a coming destruction to that of Jupiter, both of which are given in Æschylus,\* as also that dark and vindictive Destiny which in various degrees overshadows the plots of the three tragic poets, form no part of, though the first is not unknown to, the popular system of mythology to be found in the Iliad. The word Τύχη or Fortune does not occur once in the whole poem, and in those passages in which the phrases μοῖρα κραταιή—ὑπὲρ μῆρον—πεπρωμένον αἶσῃ. &c. are found, these, perhaps, mean no more than the fate or issue decreed by Jupiter to individuals and things, and have no necessary reference, as the application of the same terms in after-ages by Greeks and Romans would lead us to suppose at first, to a predestination independent of his will. Tryphiodorus, however, in the fourth century, speaks of the will of Jupiter as clearly decisive of the capture and destruction of Troy:—

—— οὐ μὲν ἔμελλον  
γηθήσειν ἐπὶ δηρόν· ἐπεὶ Διὸς ἦλυθε βουλή.†

A strong instance in the Iliad itself to illustrate this position, is the passage‡ where Jupiter laments to Juno the approaching death of Sarpedon. “Alas me!” says he, “since it is fated (Μοῖρα) that Sarpedon, dearest to me of men, should be slain by Patroclus, the son of Menœtius! Indeed my heart is divided within me while I ruminate it in my mind, whether, having snatched him up from out of the lamentable battle, I should not at once place him alive in the fertile land of his own Lycia, or whether I shall now destroy him by the hands of the son of Menœtius!” To which Juno answers—

\* Prom. Vinc. 964. Agam. 162.

† Trojæ Excid. 245.

‡ II. XVI. 434.

“Dost thou mean to rescue from death a mortal man, long since destined by fate (πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἶσχη)? You may do it—but we the rest of the gods do not sanction it.” Here it is clear from both speakers, that although Sarpedon is said to be fated to die, Jupiter might still, if he pleased, save him, and place him entirely out of the reach of any such event, and further, in the alternative, that Jupiter *himself* would destroy him by the hands of another,—

\* Ἡ ᾗδῃ ὑπὸ χερσὶ Μενoitιάδαο ΔΑΜΑΣΣΩ.\*

Thus all is referred to the will and power of Jupiter; and in like manner the oracular response which Eustathius quotes from Ælian† expressly identifies Μοῖρα with the Διὸς βουλή or will of Jupiter:—

μοῖραν μὲν Ἀνητοῖσιν ἀμήχανον ἐξάλεσθαι,  
ἣν ἐπιγεinoμένοισι πατήρ Ζεὺς ἐγγυάλισσε.

No mortal man can shun that fate on earth  
Which Father Jove assigned him at his birth.

I am aware that this position may be, and has been, disputed. Perhaps the safer way would be to state it as a matter of degree only. Homer may evidence a belief in a fate connected with men and things in a subordinate sense, and that fate or direction of events may be allowed to proceed from a source distinct from the will of the Olympian sovereign; yet, I think, no one will deny that the supremacy of Jupiter in the *Iliad* is at all events more strongly pronounced than in the later poets of Greece. Consider the tone of the celebrated address at the beginning of the eighth book, and the expressions,—

\* An exactly similar scene, in almost the same words, occurs on the occasion of Hector's death, x'. XXII. 168.

† Il. z'. VI. 487.



γνώσετ' ἔπειθ', ὅσον εἰμὶ Δεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων—  
 Ζῆν' ὑπατον μήστωρα—  
 τόςσον ἐγὼ περὶ τ' εἰμὶ Δεῶν, περὶ τ' εἴμ' ἀνθρώπων—  
 εἴ νυ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν, ὅ τοι σθένος οὐκ ἐπεικτόν.—

It must, indeed, be allowed, that although the supremacy of the Jupiter of the *Iliad* does not seem openly encumbered by any overriding fate, it comes far short of the true conception of almighty power. It is intimated by Achilles,\* that Jupiter, upon one occasion, had owed his liberty to the assistance of Briareus, although the deity himself asserts† his own omnipotence with sufficient confidence, and defies‡ all opposition, even if strengthened by the force of the then subdued and exiled Titans. This is certainly a material passage upon this point:—

σέθεν δ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀλεγίζω  
 χωομένης, οὐδ' εἴ κε τὰ νείατα πείραθ' ἱκῆαι  
 γαίης καὶ πόντοιο, ἴν' Ἰαπετός τε Κρόνος τε  
 ἦμενοι—  
 οὐδ' ἦν ἔνθ' ἀφίκηαι—

There is, in short, as might be expected, much imperfection in this representation of Jupiter; but the characteristic point which seems to be fairly established is, that he is the active and ruling power of the popular mythology, the supreme and, *strictissimo jure*, despotic chief of an aristocracy of weaker divinities, accustomed to consult with them, and liable to their opposition and even violence, yet, upon the whole, substantially autocratic, and independent of any recognised and permanent superior.§

\* A'. I. 396.

† Θ'. VIII. 5.

‡ Θ'. VIII. 478.

§ Vico says that Jupiter was the king of an aristocracy, like Agamemnon and Ulysses; and he rejects the position of the Stoics, that the deliberations of the Olympian council were subject to any superior destiny. L. ii. c. 6.

Allegory, It is said by Herodotus\* that the Greek Theogony was the invention of Homer and Hesiod; perhaps, however, it is more probable that they adopted a received mythology, though they may have enlarged and adorned it as their fancy or their convenience suggested. That in the Iliad a certain degree of system was, for the first time, imparted to the separate existences and agencies of the popular divinities, may be believed; and when the superstitious credulity of a mercurial nation, in a state of imperfect civilization, is well considered, it will appear that, on the score of probability alone, the intervention of the supernatural was required for the conduct or even allowance of an action so high and fateful in its consequences as that of the tale of Troy, involving the destruction of the greatest monarchy up to that time known to the Greeks. The unintermitting superintendence of the gods in the Iliad cannot be fully explained upon grounds of poetical ornament alone; they are never *dii ex machinis*; they are providential and governing; they prepare the conflict, mature the crisis, and strike with, or even anticipate the blow of the hero. The difference even in the Odyssey is very discernible; in the Æneid the mythology is little else than ornamental, and in the Pharsalia there is none at all. It is principally owing to our sense of the dramatic probability of the action of the divinities in the Iliad that the heroes do not seem dwarfed by their protectors; on the contrary, the manifest favourite of the gods stands out in a dilated and more awful shape before our imagination, and seems, by the association, to be lifted up into the demigod. It is not so much that he is helped by the powers above, as that he fights in the company of those who wish for the victory as much as himself. No doubt the rudiments, the elementary types of this Homeric mythology,

\* Euterp. 53.

came originally from the East, through the channels of Egypt and Phœnicia, the mothers of science and of superstition, and they were constructed on the obvious principle of separating the attributes of the Supreme Being, and assigning to each a name and a personal divinity.\* Such a system, of course, admitted infinite developement and endless variety, and an imagination less vivid than that shown in the *Iliad* would be sufficient, not only to embody the abstract qualities of the Creator and Governor of the world in all their kinds and degrees, but also to breathe a living heart into the bosom of inanimate nature, and to enshrine a genius in the river, in the forest, and on the hill. In doing this the poet would often tread on the confines of allegory, and hence it is, that many writers of ancient as well as modern times have supposed the whole supernatural machinery of the *Iliad* to be primarily and purposely figurative, and to have had no more a real existence in the intention of the poet than the *Una* and the *Duessa* of our own *Spenser*. But this supposition, taken generally, is as inconsistent with a popular belief in the actual being of the divinities introduced, as it is foreign to that graphic spirit which is a characteristic of the poem. There is a body and a colour, a locality and a motion, a separation and a conflict in the divinities of *Homer*, that demand a temporary faith in their personal agencies; and there are passages which cannot bear an allegorical interpretation, and which have no meaning except the obvious one of expressing the emotions of a sentient and corporeal nature.† This is,

\* Τὸ νόητον διηρήκασιν εἰς πολλῶν ὀνομάτων ιδιότητας.

† Παρὰ τῷ Ποιητῇ οἱ Θεοὶ σωματικῶς λαμβανόμενοι ἀνθρωποειδῶς ἐπίστανται, καὶ ἀθανασία μόνον διαφέροντες ἀνθρώπων τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐνέχονται πάθεσι.—Schol. ad. il. N. XIII. 521.

“In the Poet (*Homer*) the gods are conceived corporeally, and appear in human form, differing from man in their immortality alone, and subject to the same passions.”

indeed, now generally admitted; but, on the other hand, it is not so commonly seen that in some instances the representation is allegorical, and that the person and the attribute are confounded together. The celebrated description of *Ἀῖται*,\* Prayers, and of *Ἄρης*, Strife or Offence, and the mention† of Sleep and Death as twins, are surely mere allegories—a personification very different in kind from the ordinary presentment of Pallas and Mars. When the gods fight,‡ and Neptune is opposed to Apollo, Minerva to Mars, Juno to Diana, and Vulcan to Scamander, the respective attributes are clearly put forward in an unusual manner; and when,§ at length, Vulcan is sent to repress Scamander, and the waters boil in the midst of the hostile flames, the mythology is reduced to its first elements, and we see plainly the natural conflict of the water and the fire. Upon the whole, therefore, a continued allegorical interpretation of the supernatural machinery of the *Iliad* must be considered unreasonable; but we may admit that, in particular instances, certain characteristic qualities seem to be simply personified for the purposes of poetry.

The question of allegorical intention in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* has been one of the most fruitful of dispute amongst the many connected with those poems. More might have been settled, and less need have been written, if the obvious distinction had been taken and observed between the origin and nature of the Greek mythi or myths, and the use made of them by the heroic poets. If these two independent questions had not been confounded, it seems to me that the principal point could not have afforded room for much debate. But the mistake has been to infer, from the probably allegorical origin of a mythus, that the allegorical meaning

\* ἱ. IX. 491.

† ῥ. XX. 67.

‡ ἱ. XVI. 672.

§ ϕ. XXI. 342–365.

is the one primarily intended in the Homeric poems—a conclusion by no means necessary in itself, and against which, taken generally, the tenor and spirit of the poetry entirely revolt. I have already expressed a clear opinion, in accordance with all the most intelligent critics, that the heroic and dramatic action is the first and ruling guide of interpretation in the Homeric poetry, and I add, with Lord Bacon, that, to all appearance, no allegorical meaning is even secondarily intended throughout the greater part of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The opinions occasionally expressed to the contrary by several eminent writers, from Plato down to the commencement of the Christian era, are confessedly the result of philosophic zeal, which somewhat injudiciously involved Homer in the general question of the meaning of the ancient mythi. The Stoics and the Pythagoreans were determined that the old heroic poetry should teach physics and the divine government of the world. The Epicureans unconsciously showed the best taste in leaving the Olympian gods and goddesses alone. The elaborate systems of interpretation put forth by Iamblichus and Porphyry were entirely directed to the single object of defending the old Paganism against the attacks of the Christian writers, and the arguments of the Neo-Platonists of the Alexandrian school of the same age had all the same view. The Homeric meaning was a mere unit in the sum; the point was to defend the popular system by inspiring its figures with serious and sublime intentions, and the *Iliad* was introduced as a text-book of the mythology for that purpose. And, accordingly, we do not find that any of the Christian fathers denied the allegorical origin or secondary meaning of a large part of the Greek mythology; but they said, with truth, that the mythi had ceased to be allegorical; that the mass of mankind took them in their immediate sense, and that even if the system were understood as an allegory at

that moment, it was indefensible or superseded, after the light which had been revealed through Christianity to the world. Some of the earliest and most illustrious of the Greek Christians took this clear distinction, as, in particular, Origen and Clement of Alexandria; they admitted the probability of the figurative origin, but showed triumphantly that such an admission availed nothing as a defence of the actual worship. Indeed, how is it possible to doubt that the Greek mythology was, in its origin, figurative? Whether the main foundation of the system was physical or historical, has been much disputed, and it must be allowed that, in either case, something must be referred to popular fiction alone. It is probable that there is truth in both these theories, when a proper division is made in the mythology itself. For, in the first place, that all that part of the Theogony which is previous in order to the usurpation of supreme power by Zeus or Jupiter, is, with much allowance for mere ornament, more properly a cosmogony, or history of the creation of the material or visible universe, can scarcely be denied. And, in fact, this was the special direction which the philosophical spirit, so natively inherent in the Greeks, took in its independent impulse; it set about constructing cosmogonies, as they were called, in which the parts and powers of nature were personified, and their origination and inter-dependence displayed under an allegory capable, in general, of an obvious physical interpretation, but interwoven with a multitude of figures and actions possessing only a dramatic relation to those personified phenomena of the universe, and being, in truth, merely the supplemental creations of the poet's fancy. Consider the commencement of the Hesiodic genesis:—

"Ἦτοι μὲν πρῶτιστα Χάος γέενετ' κ. τ. λ.\*

\* Op. et Di. v. 116.



First, says the poet, there was Chaos ; then Earth ; then Eros or desire.

From Chaos sprang Night ; from Night came Light and Day.

Earth produced Heaven, exactly commensurate with herself ; then the mountains and the sea.

After that Earth bore to Heaven the Ocean ; and, after other offspring, she bore to him her youngest child, Cronus or Time.

Taking Eros, with Lord Bacon, to be the appetite or natural motion of the atom towards union—thereby representing the plastic operation of the Spirit of God—and also allowing for some unimportant transposition, we have here a pantheistic genesis exactly parallel to the Mosaic account.

Then follows the story of the conspiracy by Earth and her sons against Uranus or Heaven, and the mutilation of the latter by Cronus. Here a good deal of fable is intermixed ; yet it is not difficult to understand a latent meaning, that by the intercourse between Heaven and Earth, under cover of Night, and by their consequent offspring, are represented the original acts and processes of creation anterior to recorded time, which was the last of their productions ; as creation may be said to have ceased when time began, and history put a period to the fictions of a dark and dateless antiquity. The Roman substitution of the old Tuscan divinity, or, as Pezron\* will have it, Keltic chief, Saturn, for the Greek Cronus, which is simply Time, has helped very much to obscure the true sense of this extraordinary legend, which is in close connection with the manifestly physical allegories immediately preceding it.

Historical Interpretation.

According to the other mode of interpretation, which begins rather later, the earliest

\* Antiquity of Nations.

Greek history is shadowed forth in its mythology. In this view of the subject, Uranus, or Heaven, represents collectively the primitive government of Thessaly and of the fertile regions round about; his burying his offspring, as soon as born, in the recesses of the earth, means that the youthful generation were compelled to emigrate and colonize abroad; the groaning of the earth is the indignation of the exiled Thessalians, who, by an obvious parallel with the Hesiodic legend, are supposed to find iron and to forge weapons in Thrace and Epirus, with which they, headed by Saturn, cut off or remove the hostile counsellors of Uranus:\* these last escape in ships, and, retaining their hatred of the party which had banished them, settle in various parts among the islands and on the shores of the neighbouring countries, and, subsequently, assist Jupiter in his successful attack on Saturn. In the meantime, Saturn reigns in Thessaly, and is supported by the great majority of the Titans, his brethren, the sons of Heaven and Earth—that is, a race of whose ancestors nothing was certainly known. He is disturbed, however, by a prediction of rebellion on the part of his sons, and of ultimate dethronement; and, in the common course of preventive tyranny, he imprisons, or, as the story runs, swallows all his children. But Fate prevails;—Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon (Jupiter, Pluto, and Neptune) escape, and, by the advice of mother Earth, give liberty to the three Titans—Cottus, Gyges, and Briareus, who had been heavily chained as hostile to Saturn. Jupiter, now strengthened by all the rescued and irritated descendants of Saturn, and by such of the preceding or Titanian generation—the native inhabitants—as had been expelled or maltreated by Saturn, seized upon Mount Olympus, and from that place waged open war

\* This rests chiefly upon the equivocal meaning of the word *μηδισα*.

with Saturn and his Titans, whose head-quarters were on Mount Othrys. A complete victory, after a tremendous conflict, left Jupiter the undisputed master of Olympus and Thessaly. Pluto obtained Epirus, a tract rich in mines, and the sea and the islands were allotted to Neptune. Hence arose the last or Olympian dynasty, which embraced all the objects of the popular, as contradistinguished from the mysterious, religion of the Greeks, and is pretty clearly treated in the Hesiodic theogony as consisting, in fact, of the deified chiefs and colonizers under the final settlement of the first civilized country of Greece. The three dynasties are twice distinctly marked by Æschylus.\*

The historical mode of interpreting the Greek mythology—which is in substance <sup>Euhemerus.</sup> adopted by Vico—is in immediate connection with the celebrated system of Euhemerus. This person was a philosopher of the Cyrenaic school, and was born either at Messene in Peloponnesus, or at Messina in Sicily,—at which of the two places is doubtful. He lived in the time of Cassander, king of Macedon, by whom he was commissioned to make a voyage of discovery in the Eastern Ocean. He embarked at a port of Arabia Felix, in the Red Sea, or rather, perhaps, in the Persian Gulf; and on his return published a book called *Ἱερὰ Ἀναγραφή*—Sacred History,—in which he declared that, in the course of his wanderings, he had touched at a certain island called Panchaia, in the capital of which, Panara, he found a temple of the Tryphylia Jupiter, and in the temple a register of the births and deaths of many of the Olympian deities, inscribed on a golden column, which had been placed there, as the title announced, by Jupiter himself. He particularly specified Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter, Juno, and Neptune. His system was, that these popular deities

\* Prom. Vinc. v. 964-7. Agam. 176-80.

were, in truth, mere mortal men raised to the rank of gods on account of the benefits which they had conferred on, or the power which they had acquired amongst, mankind. Ennius translated this work, but the original and the translation are now both lost.\* Callimachus, as in hymnic duty bound, bitterly reviles Euhemerus: Plutarch, who, as associated in the priesthood, is also an interested witness upon this subject, ridicules the entire narrative, and says that no one besides had ever heard of such a place as Panchaia. It is after Euhemerus that Virgil writes—

*Totaque thuriferis Panchaia pinguis arenis.*

And after all, whether there is any truth or not in any part of this story, the important fact still remains, that at least three centuries before the Christian era, the human origination of a principal department of the popular mythology was asserted, and the assertion countenanced, by men of distinguished eminence.

The deities of Jupiter's race are chiefly moral figures. It is impossible to suppose that the Hesiodic theologist could mean that they should be understood otherwise. Jupiter married Metis—Counsel; and when she became pregnant, he devoured her, and himself brought forth Minerva—Practical Wisdom. Then he married Themis—Justice; and by her had Eunomia, Dike, and Irene—Good Order, Right, and Peace. After this he married Mnemosyne—Memory, and had the Muses. These are hardly as substantial as Una or Duessa. “Neither,” says Bacon with excellent sense, “let it trouble any man if he sometimes meet with historical narrations or additions, for ornament's sake; or confusion of times, or something transferred from one fable to another, to bring in a new allegory: for it could be no otherwise, seeing they were the inventions of men

\* Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 42.

which lived in divers ages, and had also divers ends; some being ancient, others neoterical; some having an eye to things natural, others to moral.\*

It will, perhaps, not be altogether unprofit-  
able to record here a few of the extravagances Allegoric ex-  
travagances.  
of Homeric allegorizing to which learned men have put their names. I quote previously the two following passages of Tryphiodorus, merely to show how the physical interpretation of the mythology had fixed itself in the mind of a professed imitator of the Iliad. Speaking of Sarpedon, he says,—

Δαυρή δὲ Πατρόκλοιο Μανοιτιάδαο πεσόντα  
αἵματι θακρῶσας ἐχούδῃ πατρώϊος Αἰδῆρ.†

and of the fire consuming the tents of the Greeks.—

———— ἐπιπνείουσα καὶ αὐτὴ  
μήτηρ ἀθανάτων πύρρῃ φασσίμετρος Ἥρη.‡

Gerardus Cræsius, in his “Homerus Hebraeus, sive Historia Hebraeorum ab Homero (1704),” maintained that the history of the Israelites, till their complete subjugation of Judea, is narrated in the two poems; that the Odyssey was written first, and embraces the time from the departure of Lot out of Sodom to the death of Moses; and that in the Iliad is contained the destruction of Jericho, together with the wars of Joshua and the conquest of Canaan. Jacobus Hugo, in his “Vera Historia Romana (1655),” was of opinion that Homer, by divine influence, prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, under the figure of that of Troy; the life, miracles, and passion of our Saviour, and the history of the church in the first centuries, in the Iliad.

\* Wisdom of the Ancients.

† Jupiter. v. 27.

‡ The Air; Juno the mother of Fire, or Vulcan. v. 234.



He thought that Homer meant the Dutch by the Harpies; Calvin and Luther by the Suitors of Penelope, the true Church, and the Protestants in general, by the companions of Ulysses, who ate the lotus, and forgot the Ithaca of Paradise.\* The monk in the *Gesta Romanorum* says,—“My beloved! Paris represents the Devil; Helen the human soul, or all mankind; Troy is hell; Ulysses is Christ, and Achilles the Holy Ghost.”† The editor of the book of Daniel, in the edition of the Septuagint published at Rome in 1772, contended that Homer had a knowledge of the books of Moses; and particularly pointed out the story of Bellerophon, as obviously taken from the history of Joseph. Bianchini, the Veronese mathematician, thought the *Iliad* historical; that Jupiter was the descendant of Sesostris, the great conqueror, and the subordinate divinities the dependent nations. Juno was Syria, Pallas Egypt, Mars, a confederacy of Colchis, Armenia, Thrace, and Thessaly. Carleton supposed that Homer designed England by the Cimmerians, because England is always buried in cloud and fog. Perhaps he meant London in particular. Tollius and Parnetti took the siege of Troy to be an operation in alchemy; the Homeric heroes are alembics and crucibles; their conflicts are distillations and fermentations; the plain of Troy is a laboratory, and the capture of the city is the *opus magnum*—the acquisition of the philosopher’s stone. But enough of this.

Plan.

With regard to the plan and texture of the poem itself, an exquisiteness of artifice has been discovered by many critics, which it is possible was never suspected by him or those who composed it. Indeed, in an age in which the only, or at least the most ordinary, mode of publication was by reciting or

\* Fabric. II. c. 6. s. 15.

† No. II. 310. Swan’s translation.



chanting to a lyre at feasts and sacrifices, it is difficult to conceive an adequate motive for the minstrel-bard's constructing a poem of 15,000 lines with such minute care for a beginning, a middle, and an end, as is said to be apparent in the *Iliad*. More than what is contained in one of the modern books of the poem is not likely to have been recited at one time or place; and all this foresight and retrospect would certainly have been lost upon those who might only hear a twenty-fourth part, and would rarely or never hear a half, of the *Iliad* itself. The division of the poem into books corresponding with the letters of the Greek alphabet, was probably, as I have mentioned before, the work of Aristarchus\* himself, or of the Alexandrian critics of his school; and a very slight attention will convince the student, that this arrangement has, in several in-

\* Seneca says that Apion, a grammarian of the age of Caligula, maintained that Homer himself made this division, and in proof of it relied upon the first word of the *Iliad*—Μῆνιν; the first two letters of which (μη) signify 48,—the number of the books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He adds:—"Talia sciat oportet, qui multa vult scire."—*Ep.* 88. But the common opinion is the other way:—διηρημένη ἑκατέρω ποίησις εἰς τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν στοιχείων οὐχ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ Ἀρίσταρχον:—"each poem is divided into books, agreeing in number with the letters of the alphabet. This was not done by the poet himself, but by Aristarchus and his school."—*Plut. Vit. Hom.*

"The *Iliad* is one continuous body throughout; but the Grammarians, who had the charge of putting it together under the orders, as it is said, of Pisistratus the Athenian, and who corrected and arranged it as they thought best (the chief of which Grammarians was *Aristarchus*, and after him *Zenodotus*), seeing the great length of, and difficulty of getting through, the poem, and fearing the disgust probably consequent thereon, cut it up into many parts. These sections they did not choose to name first, second, third book, &c., as Quintus Smyrnaeus has done in his *Post-Iliacs*; but, as the poem was sufficient for many sections, they thought it would be something fine and solemn to name them by the twenty-four letters of human speech."—*Eustath. in Fabric. lib. ii. c. 2. s. 9.*

The anachronism as to Aristarchus and Zenodotus is obvious.

stances, been effected in as arbitrary a manner as is the case with the distribution into chapters and verses of the books of the Old and New Testament. Yet the systematic air which this division imparts contributes in no small degree to strengthen an opinion which has such great names for its patrons. When we are told that Aristotle deduces his rules for the epic poem from the *Iliad*, and proposes it as an exemplar of them, the exercise of private judgment appears to be suspended; yet, notwithstanding what has been written to this purpose from the time of that great critic to that of Mr. Granville Penn,\* it may perhaps be doubted whether any unbiassed person would ever think, from a continuous perusal of the poem itself, of insisting on symmetry or an artificial connection of parts as a distinguishing characteristic of it.†

The Anger of Achilles seems to be proposed by the

\* Primary Argument of the *Iliad*.

† A curious incongruity, often remarked before, is worth mentioning here. Pylæmenes, chief of the Paphlagonians, is killed by Menelaus and Antilochus, ε'. V. 576-7. At ν'. XIII. 650-8, however, Harpalion, son of Pylæmenes, is killed by Meriones, and the said Pylæmenes, *in propria persona*, and ailing nothing material, accompanies the body of his son to Troy, and sheds tears of sorrow at his loss:—

————— μετὰ δέ σφι πατὴρ κίε, δάκρυα λείβων.

In the κ'. X. Diomed and Ulysses meet a man in the dark, whom they stop and question. The man's name is never mentioned in the conversation; yet at v. 447, Diomed all at once calls him by his right name:—

Μὴ δὴ μοι φύζιν γε, Δόλων, ἐμὲ ἄλλιο θυμῶ.

Think not, O Dolon, thou canst now escape.

It may, however, be said to this, that Dolon, who, as being the son of a herald, and himself πολύχρυσος, πολύχαλκος, and μούνος μετὰ πέντε κασιγνήτησι, was probably a man of some consequence amongst the Trojans, may thus have become previously known to Diomed or Ulysses.

In the ζ'. XVIII. 192, Achilles says that the armour of none

poet himself as the subject of the poem ; but then, it is said,\* all that follows after the reconciliation with Agamemnon would appear to be an ex-cess or appendix, like the fifth act of the Merchant of Venice or of Henry the Eighth ; and it has therefore been argued that the *Διὸς βουλή* or Will of Jupiter, in working the death and burial of Hector, by the instrumentality of Achilles, as an immediate preliminary to the destruction of Troy, is the true subject laid down by Homer and intended by Aristotle. According to which theory the proœmium of the poem is read in the following manner :—“ Sing, O Goddess, the destructive resentment of Achilles, the son of Peleus, which caused infinite sorrows to the Greeks, and sent many illustrious souls of heroes to Hades, and made their bodies a prey to dogs and all kinds of birds ; *and the will of Jupiter was accomplishing itself from the time when the son of Atreus, king of men, and the noble Achilles first separated after having quarrelled.*”† Now although this were the true interpretation of the passage (than which, however, any thing more harsh or foreign to the obvious construction cannot be conceived), the subject of the Song should certainly seem naturally to be that which the muse is invoked to sing—the destructive resentment of Achilles :—

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, Θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος  
οὐλομένην.‡

of the chieftains will suit him, excepting the shield of Ajax. How was it then that the armour of Achilles fitted Patroclus? It would seem a consequence that the armour of Patroclus in return might have fitted Achilles, although, to be sure, it is possible that the son of Peleus may have reasoned with respect to his armour fitting Patroclus as the Calender at Ware did touching his own wig and John Gilpin's head :—

“ My head is twice as big as yours,  
*It therefore needs must fit.*

\* Primary Argument, &c.

† A'. I. 1-7.

‡ A'. I. 1-2.

Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring  
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly Goddess, sing.

POPE.

The will of Jupiter may have been involved in, and accomplished by, the existence and effects of this resentment, as by any other of the primary occurrences of the war; but surely this eventual accomplishment of fate never presents itself as the immediate subject of this poem. Indeed, the theory in question takes the two last lines and a half of the proœmium out of the invocation altogether, and makes them a mere assertion of the poet's own; and if this assertion is to be understood as, in fact, forming and declaring the subject of the *Iliad*, it is really a singular instance of involution and obscurity in our introduction to a writer, one of whose chief characteristics has been always thought to be that he speaks his mind in the simplest and most direct manner possible.

The anger of Achilles, that is to say, the quarrel between him and Agamemnon, will legitimately include the act of reconciliation between them also, and all the immediate consequences of the reconciliation. For the whole importance of that quarrel, that which could alone make it fit to be a subject or part of a subject, consisted in the disastrous national results from it; it was therefore no more than right (poetically right, as sustaining the importance) to show that the quarrel *had* caused the evils by showing that the reconciliation cured them. Without this consideration the anger of Achilles, merely as such, would have been a bad, because an unworthy, subject of the poem.

So much may be said upon the plan of the *Iliad*, taken as a modern composition, by a known individual: but, in very truth, it seems to me extremely doubtful whether the alleged difficulty is not entirely the critics' own creation; whether the presumption of a necessity for a prearranged plan, exactly commensurate with the

extent of the poem, is not founded on a thorough misconception of the history and character of early heroic poetry. Such a presumption seems, in fact, deduced from an analogy with the artificial contexture of the drama in its finished state; although, even in that case, the difference between the Persians of Æschylus and the first Œdipus of Sophocles is as great as between the Iliad and the Jerusalem Delivered. In the first essays of national poetry, impassioned and varied narration is the paramount requisite: there must be passion to excite sympathy; variety to prevent disgust; and a story to rivet the attention: but the intricacy, the dove-tailing, the counterpoint of the drama and of modern epics would be useless, because never presented, except in fragments, to the mind of the audience. A certain *consistency* of character is necessary to create a complete conception of it, and of story to induce a sense of probability; but to seek for more than this would be to forget the constitution of society and the peculiar spirit of heroic poetry in the infancy of a nation. It may seem, therefore, that the resentment of Achilles and his return to the war are more properly the connecting link or running thread, than the specific subject, of the Iliad; the centre round which the orb of the song moves, but not the circumference which bounds it; the point of departure and the object of frequent retrospect; but that one half of the poem would have been as noble and consistent in itself if Achilles had never left Phthia, or never quarrelled with Agamemnon. The single combats of Menelaus and Paris, of Hector and Ajax; the *Ἀριστείας*, or days of Diomed, of Agamemnon, of Ulysses, of Idomeneus, of Menelaus; the shield of Achilles, the battle in the Scamander; the funeral games of Patroclus, and the restitution and burial of the body of Hector, are all of them splendid minstrel-sies, generally complete in themselves, yet having an obvious connection, as still telling the same great tale



of Troy. If the divine genius—whatever it was in name and person—which ended these immortal rhapsodies with the lamentation of women over the lifeless Hector, had gone on and told the fall of Achilles himself; the mortal conflict round his body; the capture and the flames of Ilium; the blood of Priam, and the shrieks of Cassandra, still those added rhapsodies would have been *an* Iliad, and still they might be said to have had the same general theme in the fated accomplishment of the will of Jupiter. That fixed economy of the epic poem, with which we are so familiar, and which may at first seem to us essential to it, does not appear really to exist in the Iliad; the critical subdivisions or stages are determined in it by critical fancy alone; the technical episode has no place in it. From the first to the last line of the poem the whole is *narratio directa*, a straight and onward tale; and the speeches of Nestor and Phoenix, and the description of the shield of Achilles, are not parentheses, as they have been commonly called, but parts and acts of the story itself; they have their own beauty or their own usefulness; they charm or they instruct, and either object was sufficient for the desires and the manners of the people for whom they were composed.

Poem of  
the Cid.

The poem of the Cid\* is the most ancient monument of Castilian poetry. We possess at the present day little more than 3700 lines of it, though it seems certain, from its abrupt commencement, that much must have been lost. Amongst the most eminent Spanish scholars there is but one opinion, that this is one of the noblest efforts of the Muse of Castile—the nearest approach ever made in the language of that country to the truth, the rapidity, the variety of the Iliad. Inferior, as it is, in style and, for the most part, in moral dignity, no man of sensibility can read it with-

\* Sanchez, vol. i.



out feeling the Homeric touch upon his heart. Nevertheless it is, line after line, mere history or chronicle; the story is told as it took place; the action is as diversified as the action of real life must be; no time or place occurs for episodical retrospect or prediction. It is a running song of the Cid's adventures. No one thinks of proving that the capture of Valencia, or the disgrace and chastisement of the injurious Counts of Carrion, are the subject of the poem; it is soon felt that such criticism would be out of place, and that the subject of the poem and the object of the poet were one and the same—an affectionate record of the various fortunes, the valorous heart, and the mighty arm of Don Rodrigo de Bivar.

A transcendant power of imagination and an uncommon splendour of language distinguish the *Iliad*, but do not render it different, from all other early national or heroic poetry, which is of a simple and natural composition, and partakes strongly of the character of historical narration; and he who will read this great poem without prejudice and without comment, cannot fail to perceive that its frame is essentially unlike that of the *Æneid* or the *Jerusalem Delivered*; that the rules and the plan before mentioned are inconsistent with the meaning of the poet; that his art is not the technical dexterity of the critics, but the result of natural order; his symmetry, a pervading passion, and not an elaborate collocation of parts. In fact, the simplest conception of the plan of the *Iliad* is at the same time the most noble and the most accurate.

The following argument of the *Iliad*, corrected in a few particulars, is translated from Bitaubé's argument. Bitaubé, and is, perhaps, the neatest summary that has been ever drawn up:—"A hero, injured by his general, and animated with a noble resentment, retires to his tent; and for a season withdraws himself and his troops from the war. During this interval, victory abandons the

army, which for nine years has been occupied in a great enterprise, upon the successful termination of which the honour of their country depends. The general, at length opening his eyes to the fault which he had committed, deposes the principal officers of his army to the incensed hero, with commission to make compensation for the injury, and to tender magnificent presents. The hero, according to the proud obstinacy of his character, persists in his animosity; the army is again defeated, and is on the verge of entire destruction. This inexorable man has a friend; this friend weeps before him, and asks for the hero's arms, and for permission to go to the war in his stead. The eloquence of friendship prevails more than the intercession of the ambassadors or the gifts of the general. He lends his armour to his friend, but commands him not to engage with the chief of the enemy's army, because he reserves to himself the honour of that combat, and because he also fears for his friend's life. The prohibition is forgotten; the friend listens to nothing but his courage; his corpse is brought back to the hero, and the hero's arms become the prize of the conqueror. Then the hero, given up to the most lively despair, prepares to fight: he receives from a divinity new armour; is reconciled with his general; and thirsting for glory and revenge, enacts prodigies of valour; recovers the victory; slays the enemy's chief; honours his friend with superb funeral rites; and exercises a cruel vengeance on the body of his destroyer; but finally, appeased by the tears and prayers of the father of the slain warrior, restores to the old man the corpse of his son, which he buries with due solemnities."

What is the peculiar character of the poetry of the Iliad? As to this, there is a vagueness in the general language of scholars, which may, perhaps, be traced to the influence of the treatise ascribed to Longinus. From that source, chiefly, has come the indiscriminate and often absurd use of the

terms Sublime and Sublimity, by which a really appropriate criticism is almost rendered impossible. Where things are different, names should be different also. Poetical sublimity seems specifically to consist in an expression of the vast, the obscure, or the terrible: of this the Apocalypse, the fearful vision of Eliphaz the Temanite,\* and the 18th Psalm, v. 7-17, are grand examples in each kind. But every burst of the imagination is not sublime in this sense: it may be noble or pathetic; it may be beautiful, or it may be simply delightful. Unless we thus distinguish, we shall find ourselves calling by the same name things unlike or even opposite to each other, and a vivid apprehension of the character of works of the intellect will be impracticable. There are, indeed, very few long poems in which sublimity is so predominant as to be characteristic; and it may be added, with great truth, that the most sublime productions of human genius are not the most pleasing; for nothing will permanently captivate the heart of man which is above the sphere of his affections and beyond the reach of his senses, and no poet was ever universally loved who did not oft, Antæus-like, renew his flagging strength by gentle restings on the bosom of his mother earth. Homer and Shakspeare, compared with Milton, are illustrations of this truth. Homer was universally popular wherever Greek was spoken; Shakspeare is so now wherever English is known. Zoilus was a monster and a byword, and no one would think it worth while to reason with an Englishman who should profess not to like Shakspeare. But, out of the admirers of the *Paradise Lost*, what is the proportion of those who receive pleasure from it, or have even read that divine poem through? The truth is, that there are not many passages in the *Iliad* which can be properly called sublime; and I think the grandest of those few is the

\* Job, iv. 13.

description of the universal horror and tumult attending on the battle of the gods.\* The impression produced by the imagery of this passage is complete, and has been celebrated in all times: there is a grandeur and yet a decorum in it which distinguishes it from the storm and the fury of the Titanian battle in the Theogonia. This praise must be limited, indeed, to the general description; for the details of the actual conflict of the opposed divinities in the twenty-first book are apparently the attempt of a very inferior hand. But, viewed upon the true objective principles which prevail throughout the Homeric poetry, the following lines are transcendent:—

αὐτὰρ, ἐπεὶ μεθ' ὁμίλον Ὀλύμπιοι ἤλυθον ἀνδρῶν,  
 ὦρτο δ' Ἔρις κρατερή, λαοσσόος· αὖε δ' Ἀθήνη,  
 στᾶσ' ὅτ' ἐμὲν παρὰ τάφρον ὀρυκτὴν, τείχεος ἑκτὸς,  
 ἄλλοι' ἐπ' ἀκτάων ἐριδοῦπων μακρὸν αὐτεῖ.  
 αὖε δ' Ἀρης ἐτέρωθεν, ἐρεμνῇ λαίλαπι ἴσος,  
 ὄξυ κατ' ἀκροτάτης πόλιος Τρώεσσι κελεύων,  
 ἄλλοτε παρ Σιμόεντι Δεῶν ἐπὶ Καλλιχολώνῃ.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

δεῖνόν δ' ἐβρόντησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε Δεῶν τε  
 ὑψόθεν· αὐτὰρ νέρθε Ποσειδάων ἐτίναξε  
 γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην, ὀρέων τ' αἰπεινὰ κάρηνα.  
 πάντες τ' ἐσσεύοντο πόδες πολυπίδακος Ἰδης,  
 καὶ κορυφαί, Τρώων τε πόλεις, καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.  
 ἔδδεισεν δ' ὑπένερθε ἄναξ ἐνέρων, Ἀἰδωνεύς·  
 δεῖσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἄλτο, καὶ ἴαχε, μὴ οἱ ὑπερθε  
 γαῖαν ἀναβῆξῃ Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,  
 οἰκία δὲ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανήη  
 σμερδαλέ', εὐρώεντα, τὰ τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ·  
 τόσσοι ἄρα κτύπος ὦρτο Δεῶν ἐριδι ξυνιόντων.

But when the gods descended 'mid mankind,  
 Discord, whose step is death, the battle joined.  
 And now, as Pallas stood beyond the wall

On the deep fosse, her spirit-stirring call  
 Was heard afar, and now th' embolden'd host  
 Heard her in thunder on the wave lash'd coast.  
 And now a shouting, like a whirlwind swept,  
 As Mars on Troy's high towers his station kept,  
 And now nigh distant Simois, when the god  
 On the green brow of fair Colone trod.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jove hurl'd dense thunders down—with shattering blow  
 Grim Neptune rock'd the boundless earth below ;  
 The mountains bow'd, and all the roots of Ide,  
 Troy, and the Grecian fleet, reel'd far and wide.—  
 Th' infernal monarch, 'mid his realms unknown,  
 Loud cried, and sprang in terror from his throne,  
 Lest Neptune, cleaving earth, to men and gods  
 Should spread to view hell's dark and drear abodes,  
 Of gods themselves abhorr'd ;—so dreadful rose  
 The shock of war when gods the gods oppose!

SOTHEY.

The real characteristics of the poem in general, are truth, good sense, rapidity, and variety, bodied forth into shape by a vivid imagination, and borne on the musical wings of an inimitable versification. Perhaps the phrase, *forceful liveliness*, will express the excellence of the Homeric poetry as well as any other. It is the rare union and the harmonious operation of these inestimable qualities which make one of the longest poems known the most delightful and the most instructive ; for who that has read the Iliad in youth, in manhood, or in old age, will deny it to be the Muses' purest and sweetest stream—one while foaming in fury, at another sleeping in sunshine, and again running a steady and a cheerful course—here gliding between bare and even banks, there over-arched by forest trees, or islanded with flowers which lie, like the water-lilies, on the bosom of the current ? Where has an earthly Muse ever spoken such words of fire, or when has verse ever rolled on in such unbroken and resistless power as in those two



wonderful rhapsodies in which Hector bursts through the gates of the Greek fortifications,\* and at last fights his way to the stern of Ajax's ship?† Where is there a pathos so deep and tender as in the interview between Hector and Andromache,‡ or in the lamentations of Andromache and Helen over the corpse of the departed hero?§ Where is there a picture so vivid and real as that of Achilles struggling in the surges of Scamander||, or a pause of such profound calm as while we listen to the speeches by night in the tent of Pelides,¶ or gaze on the several marvels of his Vulcanian shield?\*\*\*

The description of the shield of Achilles is so remarkable a passage in the *Iliad* that it demands a particular notice. There has been as much dispute about it as about the armour of Achilles itself. In the French controversy it formed a principal point of attack and defence, and Cesarotti, in his eighth volume, enters into a minute consideration of the arguments on either side. He shows in this, as in every part of his vast edition, an almost provoking want of true imagination and of insight into the heroic age; yet he is more felicitous in his criticism here, upon the whole, than elsewhere throughout his elaborate commentary. This Homeric shield of Achilles and the Hesiodic—not Hesiod's—shield of Hercules are the two most famous shields ever forged by the armourers of Parnassus for the favourites of the gods. I am not concerned to prove the possibility of representing in metal, within the circumference of a portable shield, every image to be found in the Homeric description. The genius of Flaxman, however, and very recently the ingenuity of Pitts, have done more than enough to rescue the poet from the charge

\* M'. XII.

† Z'. IV. 320.

|| Φ'. XXI. 233.

\*\*\* Σ'. XVIII. 478.

† O'. XV.

§ Ω'. XXIV. 725-762.

¶ I'. IX. 225.



of having exceeded the bounds of common probability : and it should be remembered, in the first place, that the workmanship is declared to be of divine skill and excellence ; and, secondly, that although it is true that in the poet's verses the minstrel sings with a *shrill* voice, the bull *roars*, and the dogs *bark*, these expressions are no other than what must necessarily be employed in any lively description of a picture or engraving of a complicated action. They are the meaning of the picture *written out*. Once or twice, indeed, Homer has slipped into a narrative of an action in progression ;—the spies first lie in ambush, and then rush out upon the herdsmen ;—the bull is first dragged along, and then torn to pieces by the lions ;—and it cannot be denied that in these instances the poet has exercised a power of continuous representation which the painter and engraver, who have but one sentence to utter, one moment to move in, possess not. But this, if any, is a slight and scarcely perceptible incongruity, when compared with the detached and unsupported figure of Perseus—for so I understand the passage\* in the Hesiodic poem, or with the actual shield of Hercules itself—not the represented field of battle—clattering with the passage over it of the engraved Gorgons.† This latter image, or attempt at an image, is, indeed, a confusion of the boundaries of the actual and supposed, into which Homer has nowhere fallen. And I cannot but take occasion from this to observe, that the nearer we approach to the fountain of poetry, the nearer we also come to that easy following of nature, in which alone consists a writer's security against the snares and pitfalls of bad taste.

The shield of Achilles was designed with equal beauty and simplicity. It contained a picture of the social and the material world. On the boss, or central circle, were engraven the sun, the moon, and all the starry host of

\* Scut. Herc. 216.

† Ib. 231.

heaven, whilst on the border or circumference was the stream of ocean. The intermediate circle was divided into compartments, in which peace and war were represented in various aspects : and the whole, taken together, told the main events of the heroic life. First, we see a city at peace within itself ; a bridal procession is passing through the streets, the torches are glaring, the pipes and harps sounding, the youths and maidens chanting the nuptial song, and the matrons standing in their doorways to see the sight. The eye passes on to the forum ; the people are assembled, the judges are seated on benches of polished stone in a circle, with wands in their hands, and two men are pleading before them. The defendant has accidentally slain the relative of the plaintiff ; the latter complains that the appointed fine has not been paid, whilst the defendant avers that he has paid it ; two talents of gold, the amount of the fine and the subject of the litigation, lie on the ground in the midst. Next we see a city beleaguered ; the warriors of the place keep the field, the enemies lie opposed to them, and the women, children, and old men defend the walls. An ambuscade is planned against the besiegers ; Mars and Pallas, conspicuous like gods above the mortals, lead them on ; they conceal themselves at the watering-place for cattle by the river side ; two spies advance ; the cattle and herdsmen come on unconsciously ; the ambushed warriors rush out, and kill the herdsmen and herds ; meanwhile the noise is heard by the army of besiegers, and battle is quickly joined on the plain. Then Contention, Tumult, and Fate rage in the conflict ; their garments are bloody ; they drag the wounded and the unwounded, and fight like living men among the ranks. The various scenes of agricultural life follow in order. First, we see the ploughman, the servant standing with a pitcher of wine to refresh the labourers at the end of each furrow, and the soil blackening beneath the share ; then come the reapers, three sheaf-binders, and glean-

ing boys, while the master is seen leaning on his staff, and watching the harvest in silent joy. Next, the happy scene of an abundant vintage is represented, in the midst of which a boy is playing on a lyre, and the rustics are dancing and singing round him. After this comes a picture of pasture; four herdsmen and nine dogs drive the oxen to the field; two dreadful lions seize a bull, and tear him to pieces; the men urge on the dogs, who bark furiously, but keep aloof. Then, in a beautiful vale, we see a great flock of white sheep, the sheep-folds, and the shepherds' huts. The last compartment of the intermediate circle contained an elaborate design of the Pyrrhic dance, as invented by Dædalus, in Gnossus, for the fair-haired Ariadne.

The shield of Hercules is of rather more complicated design. In the centre was a monstrous serpent, and around it every sort of terrible face and power; the ocean, with swans swimming on, and fishes playing in, the waves formed the outer rim. In the intermediate circle, there is, first, a fight of lions and boars,—then the battle of the Centaurs and Lapithæ, with Mars in his chariot and Pallas in arms. Next is seen Apollo playing on the lyre, in an assembly of the gods; then an arm of the sea, dolphins pursuing the other fishes, and a fisherman about to throw a casting-net. After this Perseus appears, fluttering, a detached figure, on the surface of the shield, with Medusa's head at his back; the other Gorgons follow, wreathed about with serpents. Then is seen a besieged city, with a battle, and the Fates Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos ranging over the field, and contending for the dead. Achlys—the dimness or shadow of death or misery—stands near, a hideous figure. Then follow successive representations of a city at peace, and full of pomps and festivals—of reaping, of sheaf-binding, of vintaging, of boxing, of hare-hunting, and lastly, of the chariot race.

From the foregoing sketches of the designs of these

two shields, it will immediately be seen that the conception of both is substantially the same. With two or three exceptions, the imagery differs in little more than names and arrangement; and the difference in arrangement in the shield of Hercules is altogether for the worse. The naturally consecutive order of the Homeric images needs no exposition; it constitutes in itself one of the beauties of the work. The Hesiodic images are huddled together without connection or congruity; Mars and Pallas are awkwardly introduced among the Centaurs and Lapithæ;—but the gap is wide indeed between them and Apollo with the Muses, waking the echoes of Olympus to celestial harmonies; whence, however, we are hurried back to Perseus, the Gorgons, and other images of war, over an arm of the sea, in which the sporting dolphins, the fugitive fishes, and the fisherman on the shore with his casting-net, are minutely represented. As to the Hesiodic images themselves, the leading remark is, that they catch at beauty by ornament, and at sublimity by exaggeration; and upon the untenable supposition of the genuineness of this poem, there is this curious peculiarity, that, in the description of scenes of rustic peace the superiority of Homer is decisive—while, in those of war and tumult it may be thought, perhaps, that the Hesiodic poet has more than once the advantage. Mr. Sotheby's translation of the Homeric pictures of harvest and vintage, with one or two slight corrections, may very well stand for the entire passage in Greek:—

*ἐν δὲ τίθει τέμενος βαθυλήϊον, κ. τ. λ..*

Now, laden deep with corn, a heavy field  
Rose on the view, and bristled o'er the shield;  
The reapers toil'd, the sickles in their hand;  
Heap after heap fell thick along the land;  
Three labourers grasp them, and in sheaves upbind;  
Boys, gathering up their handful, went behind,

Proffering their load ; 'mid these, in gladsome mood,  
 Mute, leaning on his staff, the master stood.  
 Apart, the heralds, in an oaken glade,  
 Slew a huge bullock, and the banquet made ;  
 While women, busy with the wheaten grain,  
 Kneaded the meal to feast at eve the swain.

Now bow'd with grapes, in gold a vineyard glow'd,  
 A purple light along its clusters flow'd ;  
 On poles of silver train'd, the vines reposed ;  
 Dark the deep trench, and pales of tin inclosed.  
 One path alone these led, along which way  
 Ceased not the gatherers through the livelong day ;  
 Youths and fair girls, who, gladdening in the toil,  
 In woven baskets bore the nectar spoil ;  
 Sweet struck the lyre a boy amid the throng,  
 And chanted with shrill voice the Linus song ;  
 Whilst the gay chorus, as they danced around,  
 Together sang, together beat the ground !

The Hesiodic battle-piece is as follows :—

———οἱ δ' ὑπὲρ αὐτέων  
 ἄνδρες ἐμαρνάσθην, κ. τ. λ.

Above them warrior-men  
 Waged battle, grasping weapons in their hands ;  
 Some from their city and their sires repelled  
 Destruction ; others hasten'd to destroy ;  
 And many press'd the plain ; but more still held  
 The combat. On the strong constructed towers  
 Stood women shrieking shrill, and tore their cheeks  
 In very life, by Vulcan's glorious craft ;  
 The old men, hoar with age, assembled stood  
 Without the gates, and to the blessed gods  
 Their hands uplifted for their fighting sons,  
 Fear-stricken———  
 Behind them stood the Fates, of aspect black,  
 Grim, slaughter-breathing, stern, insatiable,  
 Their white fangs gnashing, and strange conflict held  
 For those who fell ; each, fiercely thirsting, sought  
 To drink the sable blood. Whom first they snatch'd,  
 Prostrate, or staggering with the fresh-made wound,



On him their talons huge they struck—the soul  
Went down the cold abyss.

They, glutted to the heart

With dead men's gore, behind them cast the corse,  
And back, with hurrying rage, they turn'd to seek  
The throng of battle. And hard by there stood  
Clotho, and Lachesis, and Atropos;  
They, all around one man, in savage fight  
Were mix'd, and on each other turn'd in wrath  
Their glaring eyes and homicidal hands;  
Unspeakable that strife! And close beside  
Stood the War-misery, wan and worn with woe,  
Ghastly and wither'd, and with hunger-pains  
Convulsed; her cheeks dropp'd blood to earth; with teeth  
All wide disclosed, in grinning agony,  
She stood; a cloud of dust her shoulders spread,  
And her eyes ran with tears.

*ELTON, with alterations.*

This passage and the Homeric parallel have never been surpassed or equalled in their way. Proportion and force mark the latter,—pathos and terror reign in the former. There is a just censure, in the Treatise on the Sublime, of an expression in the description of Achlys; but the whole figure is most powerfully conceived and drawn, and the picture of the three sisters ranging the battle-field, and striving with each other for the dead and the dying, is inexpressibly awful, and, though partially borrowed from the corresponding passage in the Iliad, is, as a whole, unique in the Greek poetry. No one can read this passage without feeling the mystery and the gloom of the northern rhyme come over his soul, and recurring in imagination to the Fatal Sisters, the Choosers of the Slain of the Gothic mythology.

A taste of unerring purity reigns throughout the Homeric description;—the same cannot be said of that by the Hesiodic poet. The shield of Achilles is bordered by the ocean, flowing in simple majesty around it; so



the shield of Hercules is bounded by the ocean; but swans swimming on the waves, and shoals of fish playing under water, are added by way of variation or embellishment. That Virgil, whose shield of Æneas has small claim to any praise for graphic beauty, and is, in fact, little more than a spirited epitome of the Roman history in compliment to Augustus, should have been induced to imitate this wretched prettiness of the later poet, must shake, in some degree, the foundations of the general opinion entertained of his accurate judgment, or lead us to see more clearly, that the principles on which the Æneid is constructed were of an origin and a tendency entirely different from those which were involved in the circumstances of time, place, and manner, amid which the Iliad was produced. The same image, with some difference of exhibition, formed the external circle of both the Greek shields; but in the centre of the shield of Achilles was pictured the firmament of heaven;—in the centre of that of Hercules, a monstrous dragon. More striking symbols of each work, respectively, could not have been imagined; for in the first reigns beauty—in the last terror. The predominant impression made by the one would have been admiration, if not delight; whilst that of the other would have been fear, not unaccompanied by disgust.

The old work, entitled the “Contest of Homer and Hesiod,” — *Ὁμήρου καὶ Ἡσιόδου ἀγών*—was probably written about the first half of the second century, as Adrian, who reigned from A.D. 117 to 138, is mentioned in it by name. It is a prose composition by some one duly impressed with the transcendant superiority of Homer; and the story is so told as to reflect exclusive credit upon him, although the ancient tradition is followed in assigning the prize to Hesiod. The latter began by putting several questions to Homer, which were answered chiefly out of the Iliad and Odyssey; and, in particular, when interrogated as to the

greatest happiness which men could enjoy on earth, Homer declared his opinion in a passage from the *Odyssey*, which savours something of the great poet's alleged jovial temperament :—

*ὁππότεν εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κατὰ δῆμον ἅπαντα,  
δαιτυμόνες δ' ἀνὰ δώματ' ἀκούάζωνται αἰοῖδοῦ,  
ἡμενοι ἐξείης· παρὰ δὲ πλήθωσι τράπεζαι,  
σίτου καὶ κρειῶν· μέθυ δ' ἐκ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων  
οἶνοχόος φορέησι, καὶ ἐγχεῖν δεπάεσσι·  
τοὔτό τι μοι κάλλιστον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν εἶδεται εἶναι.*

When joyance swells the people's heart around,  
And guests sit list'ning to the minstrel's sound;  
When tables groan 'neath bread and festal meat,  
And with sweet wine each guest the heralds greet,  
Seems to my soul of earth-permitted bliss,  
This the fair haven and the glory this !

The assembly are represented as so transported with the sweetness of these lines, that they were from that time forward always called the golden verses, and were, for a thousand years afterwards, constantly pronounced as a sort of grace at all public sacrifices and festivals.

The story goes on to state, that Hesiod, getting vexed at the manifest popularity of his rival, proceeded to ask him the meaning of sundry crabbed riddles, and then recited a certain number of unconnected lines, with a requisition that Homer should immediately answer each of them by a verse corresponding with and completing it. In these and other equally unfair trials of skill, success still attended Homer, and all the Greeks present loudly demanded that he should be crowned victor. However, Panoides ordered each competitor to recite the passage esteemed by himself as the most beautiful in his works ; upon which Hesiod is very unwarrantably made to stake his fame as a poet upon the smooth, but

otherwise not remarkable, commencement of the *Georgic*, or agricultural part of his *Works and Days*.

Πηληϊάδεωv Ἀτλαγείεωv ἐπιτελλομενάων, κ. τ. λ.\*

After him Homer recited the following lines, which are to be found in different parts of the *Iliad*, and which do not seem well put together, inasmuch as the commencement has reference to men standing on the defensive, and the conclusion represents an attack :—

ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' Αἴαντας δοιοὺς ἴσταντο φάλαγγες  
καρτεραί, ἅς οὔτ' ἄν κεν Ἀρης ὀνόσαιτο μετελθὼν,  
οὔτε κ' Ἀθηναίη λαοσσόος· οἱ γὰρ ἄριστοι  
κρινθέντες Τρῳάς τε καὶ Ἑκτορα δῖον ἔμιμνον,  
φράζαντες δόρυ δουρὶ, σάκος σάκει· προθελύμνῃ·  
ἀσπίς ἄρ' ἀσπίδ' ἔρειδε, κόρυς κόρυν, ἀνέρα δ' ἀνὴρ·  
ψαῦον δ' ἵπποκόμοι κόρυθες, λαμπροῖσι φάλοισι  
νευόντων· ὧς πυκνοὶ ἐφέστασαν ἀλλήλοισιν.†

ἔφριξεν δὲ μάχῃ φθισίμεροτος ἐγχέεισι  
μακραις, ἅς εἶχον ταμείχρους· ὅσσε δ' ἄμερδεν  
αὐγὴ χαλκείη, κορύθων ἀπὸ λαμπομενάων,  
θωρήκων τε ιεοσμῆκτων, σακέων τε φαεινῶν,  
ἐρχομένων ἄμυδις· μάλα κεν θρασυκάρδιος εἴη,  
ὅς τότε γηθήσειεν ἰδὼν πόνον, οὔδ' ἀκάχοιτο.‡

Fix'd at his post, was each bold Ajax found,  
With well-ranged squadrons strongly circled round;  
So close their order, so disposed their fight,  
As Pallas' self might view with fixed delight;  
Or, had the god of war inclined his eyes,  
The god of war had own'd a just surprise.  
A chosen phalanx, firm, resolved as Fate,  
Descending Hector and his battle wait.  
An iron scene gleams dreadful o'er the field,

\* V. 383.

† N'. XIII. 126-33.

‡ N'. XIII. 339-44.

Armour in armour lock'd, and shield in shield;  
 Spears lean on spears, on targets targets throng,  
 Helms stuck to helms, and man drove man along.  
 The floating plumes unnumbered wave above——

\* \* \* \* \*

All dreadful glow'd the iron face of War,  
 Bristled with upright spears, that flock'd afar;  
 Dire was the gleam of breastplates, helms, and shields,  
 And polish'd arms emblaz'd the flaming fields:  
 Tremendous scene! that general horror gave,  
 But touch'd with joy the bosoms of the brave. POPE.

At the conclusion of this passage, the bystanders called again for a declaration of victory in favour of Homer. But the judge awarded the prize to Hesiod, with a remark, that it was more just to pronounce him superior who exhorted men to agriculture and peace, than one who celebrated, and must, naturally, stimulate his audience to, wars and bloodshed. This decision, which, if the question had been whether Homer or Hesiod taught the better political economy, might not have been amiss, became, under the expression of Πάνιδος or Πανοίδου ψῆφος, universally proverbial for an absurd judgment. Hesiod, however, took the compliment on the score of his poetry, and dedicated his tripod to his native patrons, with the following inscription:—

Ἡσίδοσ Μούσαις Ἑλικωνίσι τόνδ' ἀνέθηκεν,  
 ὕμνην νικήσας ἐν Χαλκίδι Δεῖον Ὀμηρον.

This Hesiod to the Heliconian Nine,  
 Conquering at Chalcis Homer the divine.

The lines supposed to have been cited by Homer, in the foregoing tale, are very vigorous and lifesome; but had I been commissioned to choose out of the *Iliad* one single connected passage, as a good sample of quality, I think the following would have done the poet more justice, although it would have been almost equally open

to the economical censure of Panoides. According to Eustathius, the ancient critics marked these verses with an asterisk, to denote their transcendant beauty. They describe Minerva arming herself for the battle:—

αὐτὰρ Ἀθηναίη, κόρη Διὸς Αἰγίοχιο,  
πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν ἑανὸν πατρὸς ἐπ' οὐδαι,  
ποικίλον, ὃν ῥ' αὐτὴ ποιήσατο καὶ κάμει χερσίν·  
ἡ δέ, χιτῶν' ἐνδύσα Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο,  
τεύχεσιν ἐς πόλεμον θωρήσσετο δακρυόεντα.  
ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετ' Αἰγίδα θυσσανέσσαν.  
δεινὴν, ἣν περὶ μὲν πάντη Φόβος ἐστεφάνωτο·  
ἐν δ' Ἔρις, ἐν δ' Ἀλκή, ἐν δὲ κρύεσσα Ἴωκή·  
ἐν δέ τε Γοργεῖη κεφαλὴ δεινοῦ πελώρου,  
θεινὴ τε, σμερδὴν τε, Διὸς τέρας Αἰγίοχιο.  
κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἀμφίφαλον κυνέην θέτο τετραφάληρον,  
χρυσείην, ἑκατὸν πόλεων πρυῖέσσ' ἀραρυῖαν.  
ἐς δ' ὄχρεα φλόγεα ποσὶ βήσατο· λάζετο δ' ἔγχος  
βριθύ, μέγα, στιβαρόν, τῷ δάμνησι στίχας ἀνδρῶν  
ἡρώων, τοῖσιν τε κοτέσσεται ὀξυμοπάτρη.  
Ἦρῃ δὲ μάστιγι θοῶς ἐπεμαίετ' ἄρ' ἵππους,  
αὐτόματα δὲ πύλαι μύκον οὐρανοῦ, ἅς ἔχον Ὀφραι.  
τῇς ἐπιτέτραπται μέγας οὐρανός, Οὐλυμπός τε,  
ἡμὲν ἀνακλῖναι πυκινὸν νέφος, ἡδ' ἐπιθεῖναι.  
τῇ ῥα δι' αὐτῶν κεντρηνεκέας ἔχον ἵππους·  
εὖρον δὲ Κρονίωνα, θεῶν ἄτερ ἥμενον ἄλλων.  
ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ πολυδαιράδος Οὐλύμπιοι.\*

Meantime, Minerva, progeny of Jove,  
On the adamantine floor of his abode  
Let fall, profuse, her variegated robe,  
Labour of her own hands. She first put on  
The corslet of the cloud-assembler God;  
Then arm'd her shoulder with the dreadful shield,  
The shaggy Ægis, border'd thick around  
With Terror;—there was Discord, Prowess there,  
There hot Pursuit, and there the feature grim

\* E. V. 733-754.

Of Gorgon, dire Deformity, a sign  
 Oft borne portentous on the arm of Jove.  
 Her golden helm, whose concave had sufficed  
 The legions of a hundred cities, rough  
 With warlike ornament superb, she fix'd  
 On her immortal head. Thus arm'd, she rose  
 Into the flaming chariot, and her spear  
 Seized, ponderous, huge, with which the goddess, sprung  
 From an Almighty Father, levels ranks  
 Of heroes, against whom her anger burns.  
 Juno with lifted lash urged quick the steeds;  
 At her approach, spontaneous roared the wide  
 Unfolding gates of heaven—the heavenly gates  
 Kept by the watchful Hours, to whom the charge  
 Of the Olympian summit appertains,  
 And of the boundless ether back to roll,  
 And to replace the cloudy barrier dense.  
 Spurr'd through the portal flew the rapid steeds:  
 Apart from all, and seated on the point  
 Superior of the cloven mount they found  
 The Thunderer.

COWPER.

As an instance of the perfection of energetic brevity, the announcement by Antilochus to Achilles of the death and despoiling of Patroclus has been pointed out by Quintilian and many other critics:—

*κέῖται Πάτροκλος· νέκυσ δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχονται  
 γυμνοῦ· ἀτὰρ τά γε τεύχε' ἔχει κορυθαίολος "Εκτωρ.\**

Dead is Patroclus! for his corpse they fight,  
 His naked corpse;—his arms are Hector's right.

POPE.

By a close study of life, and by a true and natural mode of expressing every thing, Homer was enabled to venture upon the most peculiar and difficult situations, and to extricate himself from them with the completest success. The whole scene between Achilles and Priam, when the latter comes to the Greek camp for the purpose of redeeming the body of Hector, is at once the

\* Σ'. XVIII. 20, 21.



most profoundly skilful, and yet the simplest and most affecting passage in the *Iliad*. Quintilian has taken notice of the following speech of Priam, the rhetorical artifice of which is so transcendent, that if genius did not often, especially in oratory, unconsciously fulfil the most subtle precepts of criticism, we might be induced, on this account alone, to consider the last book of the *Iliad* as what is called spurious—in other words, of later date than the rest of the poem. Observe the exquisite taste and management of Priam in occupying the mind of Achilles from the outset with the image of his father; in gradually introducing the parallel of his own situation, and lastly, mentioning Hector's name, when he perceives that the hero is softened, and then only in such a manner as to flatter the pride of his conqueror. The ἐγὼ δ' ἐλπεινότερός περ, and the ἀπώσατο ἥκα γέροντα, are not exactly like the tone of the earlier parts of the *Iliad*. They are almost too fine and pathetic. The whole passage defies translation; for there is *that* about the Greek which has no name, but which is of so fine and ethereal a subtilty that it can only be *felt* in the original, and is lost in an attempt to transfuse it into another language.\*

μνηῆσαι πατρός σεῖο, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ,  
 τηλίκου, ὥσπερ ἐγὼν, ὀλοῶν ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ.  
 καὶ μὲν που κεῖνον περυναίεται ἀμφὶς ἐόντες  
 τεύρουσ', οὐδὲ τις ἐστίν, ἀρῆν καὶ λοίγον ἀμύναι·  
 ἀλλ' ἦτοι κενός γε, σέθεν ζῶντος ἀκούων,  
 χαίρει τ' ἐν θυμῷ, ἐπὶ τ' ἔλπεται ἡματα πάντα  
 ὄψεσθαι φίλον υἱὸν ἀπὸ Τροίῃθεν ἰόντα·  
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ πανάποτμος, ἐπεὶ τέκον υἱᾶς ἀρίστους  
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, τῶν δ' οὐτίνα φημι λελεῖφθαι.

\* Upon turning to Cesarotti, I find I ought not to have praised this speech. He says:—"Si è creduto di dover *nella V. P. smaccar i colori* del quadro di Peleo, conservando solo quei rapporti che potevano commuover Achille senza irritarlo."

πεντήκοντά μοι ἦσαν, ὅτ' ἤλυθον υἷες Ἀχαιῶν·  
 ἐννέα καὶ δέκα μὲν μοι ἱῆς ἐκ νηδύος ἦσαν,  
 τοὺς δ' ἄλλους μοι ἔτικτον ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γυναῖκες.  
 τῶν μὲν πολλῶν Δοῦρος Ἀρης ὑπὸ γούνατ' ἔλυσεν·  
 ὃς δέ μοι οἷος ἦν, εἴρυτο δὲ ἄστνυ καὶ αὐτοὺς,  
 τὸν σὺ πρῶην κτεῖνας, ἀμυνόμενον περὶ πάτρης.  
 Ἔκτορα τοῦ νῦν εἴνεχ' ἱκάνω νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,  
 λυσόμενος παρὰ σείῳ, φέρω δ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα.  
 ἀλλ' αἰδέσθω θεοὺς, Ἀχιλλεῦ, αὐτόν τ' ἐλέησον,  
 μνησάμενος σοῦ πατρὸς· ἐγὼ δ' ἐλεεινότερός περ  
 ἔτλην δ', οἷ' οὐπω τις ἐπιχθόνιος βροτὸς ἄλλος,  
 ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνου ποτὶ στόμα χεῖρ' ὀρέγessθαι.

ὣς φάτο· τῷ δ' ἄρα πατὴρ ὑφ' ἡμέρον ὤρσε γόοιο.  
 ἀψάμενος δ' ἄρα χεῖρὸς, ἀπώσατο ἦκα γέροντα.  
 τῷ δὲ μνησάμενω, ὁ μὲν Ἔκτορος ἀνδροφόνου,  
 κλαῖ' ἀδινά, προπάραιθε ποδῶν Ἀχιλλῆος ἐλυσθείς·  
 αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς κλαῖεν ἐὼν πατέρ', ἄλλοτε δ' αἶψα  
 Πάτροκλον τῶν δὲ στοναχὴ κατὰ δῶματ' ὀρώρει.\*

Think, O Achilles, semblance of the gods!  
 On thy own father, full of days like me,  
 And trembling on the gloomy verge of life.  
 Some neighbour chief, it may be, even now  
 Oppresses him, and there is none at hand,  
 No friend, to succour him in his distress.  
 Yet, doubtless, hearing that Achilles lives,  
 He still rejoices, hoping, day by day,  
 That one day he shall see the face again  
 Of his own son from distant Troy return'd.  
 But me no comfort cheers, whose bravest sons,  
 So late the flower of Ilium, are all slain.  
 When Greece came hither, I had fifty sons;  
 Nineteen were children of one bed, the rest  
 Born of my concubines. A num'rous house!  
 But fiery Mars hath thinn'd it. One I had,  
 One, more than all my sons, the strength of Troy.  
 Whom, standing for his country, thou hast slain—  
 Hector. His body to redeem I come  
 Into Achaia's fleet, bringing, myself,

Ransom inestimable to thy tent.  
 Rev'rence the gods, Achilles! recollect  
 Thy father; for his sake compassion show  
 To me more pitiable still, who draw  
 Home to my lips (humiliation yet  
 Unseen on earth) his hand who slew my son!

So saying, he waken'd in his soul regret  
 Of his own sire; softly he placed his hand  
 On Priam's hand, and push'd him gently away.  
 Remembrance melted both. Rolling before  
 Achilles' feet, Priam his son deplored,  
 Wide-slaughtering Hector; and Achilles wept  
 By turns his father, and by turns his friend  
 Patroclus: sounds of sorrow filled the tent.

COWPER.

As to the Characters of the Iliad, they are admirable for their variety and distinctness; not indeed worked up in the detail, or to the full development, of modern tragedy, but traced in a few bold and shaping lines in the manner most agreeable to the spirit of heroic poetry. In the drama, the poet studiously introduces contrasts; in heroic poetry distinctness is all that is wanted, and as much as would be pleasing. The epic poet does not so much set out his personages or actors for exhibition in themselves, or to play them off one against the other, as for the purpose of conducting and animating the action of the poem; and this is especially true of the Iliad, in which the several heroes come in and go off something in the way of the romantic compeers of Orlando, without any obvious connection, or, in every instance, contributing by what they say or do to the development of the general story. It would, indeed, be quite inconsistent with the plan of the epic poem of subsequent times, to introduce such a number of warriors so nearly equal in personal prowess and success as those of the Iliad: Ajax, Diomed, Agamemnon, Hector, Ulysses, Menelaus, Idomeneus, Sarpedon, Æneas, Meriones, and the rest, would have been an overwhelming incumbrance to Virgil or

Character-  
of the  
Poem.

Tasso : but they all move at large in the Iliad, and each finds ample room to play the hero in his turn. The passion and ferocity of Achilles, the modesty and never-failing constancy of Diomed, the animal courage of Ajax, the courtliness of Ulysses, the generosity, the kindness, and the rashness of Hector, and the gentlemanly gallantry of Sarpedon, are very remarkable. The epithet *μεσαιοπύλιος*\* (half grey-haired) distinguishes Idomeneus, who is in other respects the least prominent amongst the chiefs ; and Phoenix differs from Nestor, as an old man in private life is different from a veteran statesman. But few things are more interesting than to observe how the same hand that has given us the fury and the inconsistency of Achilles, gives us also the consummate elegance and tenderness of Helen. She is throughout the Iliad a genuine lady, graceful in motion and speech, noble in her associations, full of remorse for a fault for which higher powers seem responsible, yet grateful and affectionate towards those with whom that fault had connected her. I have always thought the following speech, in which Helen laments Hector, and hints at her own invidious and unprotected situation in Troy, as almost the sweetest passage in the poem.† It is another striking instance of

\* N. XIII. 361.

† But it does not satisfy Cesarotti, “Il lamento di Elena nel testo,” says he, “è dettato principalmente dall’ interesse; nella V. P. esso è ispirato dal rimorso, *il che lo rende più interessante, e disarmar l’ ira dei lettori contro questa bellezza funesta.* (What man of sense, since the Trojan war, has been angry with Helen?) Vi si è anche aggiunto un cenno che dà risalto alla moralità del poema, e rappresenta la morte di Ettore come una punizione degli Dei per la sua soverchia connivenza alla passion del fratello.” Will the reader excuse the vindictiveness of my spirit, in quoting this *nescio quid majus Iliade?*—

———“ Ahimè che tanto

A me non lice !’ vergognosa e trista

Ripiglia Elena; ‘ io più d’ ogn’ altra, io tutto

that refinement of feeling and softness of tone which so generally distinguish the last book of the *Iliad* from the rest :—

"Εκτορ, ἐμῶ θυμῷ δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων,  
 ἡ μὲν μοι πόσις ἐστὶν Ἀλέξανδρος Δειοιδῆς,  
 ὅς μ' ἄγαγε Τροίηνδ' ὡς πρὶν ὠφελλον ὀλέσθαι.  
 ἤδη γὰρ νῦν μοι τόδ' εἰκοστὸν ἔτος ἐστίν,  
 ἐξ οὗ κείθεν ἔειπες, καὶ ἐμῆς ἀπελήλυθα πάτρης·  
 ἀλλ' οὐπω σεῦ ἄκουσα κακὸν ἔπος, οὐδ' ἀσύφηλον·  
 ἀλλ' εἴ τις με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι  
 δαέρων, ἢ γαλῶν, ἢ εἰνατέρων εὐπέπλων,  
 ἢ ἐκυρῇ, (ἐκυρὸς δὲ, πατήρ ὣς, ἥπιος αἰεὶ,)  
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τόνγ', ἐπέεσσι παραιφάμενος, κατέρυκες  
 σῇ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνῃ, καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσι.  
 τῷ σέ δ' ἅμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον, ἀχθυμένη κῆρ.  
 οὐ γάρ τίς μοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ  
 ἥπιος, οὐδὲ φίλος· πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασι.\*

Ti debbo il pianto mio, cognato (oh nome  
 Mi vanto e mia vergogna!), io di tua morte  
 Son io la rea, per colpa mia peristi,  
 Colpa fatale! oh foss' io scesa innanzi  
 Laggiù tra l' ombre che al tuo sangue, a Troja  
 Esser cagion di tanto lutto, e farmi  
 Segno all' odio comun. Pur tu pietoso  
 Dai troppo giusti meritati oltraggi  
 Mi fosti schermo, e non fù mai che uscisse  
 Dalla tua bocca una scortese voce  
 Memore de' miei falli: ahimè che forse  
 La tua stessa bontà verso di questa  
 Sciaurata donna sul tuo capo attrasse  
 L' ira d' avversi Numi. Orche sei spento  
 Come sottrarmi alle rampogne, all' onte,  
 All' interno mio strazio? e con qual pena  
 Vorrà nel dì fatale il cielo irato  
 Punir la troppo memoranda colpa.  
 Del sedotto mio cor?"

Dear Hector! dearer to my heart by far  
 Than all my brothers of thy kindred are,  
 Though twice ten years have seen me here abide  
 Fair Paris' wife (ah! had I rather died,  
 Before he lured me from my native land,  
 Before he brought me to this Dardan strand!),  
 Yet for those twice ten years no single word  
 Unkind, brave Hector! from thy lips I've heard.  
 Nay, if another had begun to chide  
 Brother or sister, or a brother's bride  
 Robed in bright garments, or if even the Queen,  
 (Thy father ever show'd a father's mien!)  
 Still didst thou check them, still wouldst kindness teach  
 By thy sweet carriage and by thy sweet speech!  
 Thee, therefore, and with thee myself I weep,  
 For thee and me I mourn in anguish deep;  
 Throughout wide Troy I see no friendly eye,  
 And Trojans shudder if I pass them by.

The way in which almost all the Homeric characters were debased by the Tragedians will be noticed hereafter. On the stage they may be Athenians, but they are no longer heroes. The Agamemnon of Æschylus, and the Ajax of Sophocles, are exceptions, although these are rather equal than similar. Ulysses and Menelaus were the worst treated.

Similes,

The Similes form a very peculiar feature of the Iliad. Of these there are more than two hundred, and there is hardly one of that number that has not been imitated nearly as many times. The Homeric simile has always a point of similitude, but beyond that one point the degrees of resemblance vary infinitely. Almost each simile in the Iliad is a complete picture in itself, and it is often not easy to catch at a glance the middle point upon which it is raised: for, although many of them are wonderfully minute in their correspondence with the circumstances of the action, many more of them take, as it were, a hint from the occasion, and the poet goes on to finish the details of the image, or group of images, which has been accidentally suggested to him. The best taste will be con-



tent with this general resemblance, and not labour, except in some striking cases, to assort the minor particulars, which will frequently lead to a quaintness and an affectation utterly foreign to the Homeric genius. To illustrate this, a very picturesque simile may be advantageously quoted, the subject of comparison in which is simply the incessant hurling of stones and other missiles, by the Greeks and Trojans, at each other :—

τῶν δ', ὥστε νιβάδες χιόνος πίπτωσι θάμναι  
 ἥματι χειμερίῳ, ὅτε τ' ὤρετο μητίετα Ζεὺς  
 νιφέρειν ἀνθρώποισι, πιθανοκόμενος τὰ ἅ κ' ἤλα·  
 κοιμήσας δ' ἀνέμους χέει ἔμπεδον, ὕφρα καλὺψη  
 ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφὰς καὶ πρῶνας ἄκρους,  
 καὶ πεδία λωπεῦντα καὶ ἀνδρῶν πίονα ἔργα.  
 καὶ τ' ἐφ' ἁλὸς πολὺς κέχυται λιμέσιν τε καὶ ἀκταῖς·  
 κύμα δέ μιν προσπλάζον ἐρύκεται, ἄλλα τε πάντα  
 εἴλνυται καθύπερθ', ὅτ' ἐπιέριση Διὸς ὄμβρος·  
 ὥς τῶν ἀμφοτέρωσθε λίθοι πωτῶντο θάμναι.\*

———— As the feathery snows  
 Fall frequent on some wint'ry day, when Jove  
 Hath ris'n to shed them on the race of man,  
 And show his arrowy stores; he lulls the winds,  
 Then shakes them down continual, covering thick  
 Mountain tops, promontories, flowery meads,  
 And cultured valleys rich; the ports and shores  
 Receive it also of the hoary Deep,  
 But there the waves it bound, while all beside  
 Lies whelm'd beneath Jove's fast-descending shower:  
 So thick, from side to side, by Trojans hurl'd  
 Against the Greeks, and by the Greeks return'd,  
 The stony volleys flew. COWPER.

What a beautiful and exact picture is this of the snow falling long and heavily by the sea side on a quiet winter day! As for the similitude, that consists merely in the frequent snow-flakes and the frequent missiles.

There is another simile of the same kind, where Agamemnon is described as lying awake in anxious meditation :—

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἀστράπτῃ πόσις Ἴηρης ἡϋκόμοιο,  
τεύχων ἢ πολὺν ὕμῃρον ἀθέσφατον, ἢ ἐχάλαζαν,  
ἢ νίφετον, ὅτε πέρ τε χιῶν ἐπάλυνεν ἀρούρας,  
ἢ ποθὶ πτολέμοιο μέγα στόμα πευκεδανοῦ.  
ὥς πυκνὸν ἐν στήθεσσιν ἀνεστονάχιζ' Ἀγαμέμνων.\*

As when the spouse of beauteous Juno darts  
His frequent fires, designing heavy rain  
Immense, or hail-storm, or field-whitening snow,  
Or else wide-throated war calamitous:  
So frequent were the groans by Atreus' son  
Heaved from his inmost heart.

COWPER.

The point of comparison is here, also, between the quick succession of the drops of rain or hailstones, or snow-flakes, and the frequency of the groans of the hero.

On the other hand, the following simile presents a likeness in each of its particulars. Hector rushes from the top of the Grecian wall into the intervening plain, till he comes close upon the phalanx of the Ajaces, and then stops :—

—— ὀλοοίτροχος ὥς ἀπὸ πέτρης,  
ὄντε κατὰ στεφάνης ποταμὸς χειμάρρῳ ὥσῃ,  
ῥήξας ἀσπέτῳ ὕμῃρῳ ἀναιδέος ἔχματα πέτρης,  
ὑψὶ τ' ἀνθρώπων πέτεται, κτυπεῖ δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ  
ῥῆγ' ὁ δ' ἀσφαλῆως θίξει ἔμπεδον, ὅφρ' ἂν ἵκηται  
ἰσόπεδον, τότε δ' οὔτι κυλίνδεται, ἐσσύμενός περ.  
ὥς Ἐκτωρ.†

And as a round peece of a rocke,†  
which with a winter's flood

\* κ'. X. 5.

† Ν'. XIII. 137.

‡ For the convenience of printing, Chapman's line, which is, in fact, nothing but the common ballad measure written at length, is here broken at the cæsura into two verses.

Is from his top torne, when a showre  
 poured from a bursten cloud  
 Hath broke the naturall band it had  
 within the rough steepe rocke,  
 Flies jumping all adowne the woods,  
 resounding everie shocke,  
 And on, uncheckt, it headlong leaps,  
 till in a plaine it stay,  
 And then (tho' never so impelled),  
 it stirs not any way :—  
 So Hector.

СПАРΜΑΝ.

So the beautiful simile where the wounded Ulysses keeps the Trojans at bay till Ajax comes to rescue him, is exquisitely picturesque, and yet, with the exception of the fate of Ulysses, minutely accurate :—

————— ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' αὐτὸν  
 Τρῶες ἔπονθ', ὥσεί τε δαφνοῖνοι θῶες ὕρεσφιν  
 ἄμφ' ἔλαφον κεραὸν βεβλημένον, ὃν τ' ἔεαλ' ἀνὴρ  
 ἰὼ ἀπὸ νευρῆς· τὸν μὲν τ' ἤλυξε πόδεςσι  
 φεύγων, ὅφρ' αἶμα λιαρὸν, καὶ γούνατ' ὀρώρη·  
 αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τόνγε δαμάσσεται ὦκὺς οἷστος,  
 ὠμοφάγοι μιν θῶες ἐν οὔρεσι δαρδάπτουσιν  
 ἐν νέμεϊ σκιερῷ· ἐπὶ τε λῆν ἤγαγε δαίμων  
 σίντην· θῶες μὲν τε διέτρεσαν, αὐτὰρ ὁ δάπτει·  
 ὥς ῥα τότ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσῆα.\*

Circled with foes—as when a packe  
 of bloodie jackals cling  
 About a goodly palmed hart,  
 hurt with a hunter's bow;  
 Whose 'scape his nimble feet insure,  
 whilst his warm blood doth flow,  
 And his light knees have powre to move;—  
 but (maistred by his wounde,  
 Embost within a shadie hill),  
 the jackals charge him rounde,  
 And teare his flesh—when instantly  
 Fortune sends in the powres

Of some stern lion—with whose sighte  
 they flie, and he devours.—  
 So they around Ulysses prest.

CHAPMAN.

Love of  
 Nature.

It is especially in the similes of the *Iliad* that Homer discovers that accurate observation of the habits and appearances of animated Nature, without which few great poets have ever existed. There is not one of these beautiful pieces from which a painting might not be taken ; although it may be allowed, that in the strict and proper sense of the word *picturesque*, few of the Homeric similes are pictures in themselves. I cannot, however, but think, that the opinion expressed upon this subject by Bishop Copleston, in his *Prælectiones Academicæ*, is something too sweeping and exclusive. “*Ipsi etiam Homero, quanquam intima ei patebant naturæ penetralia, et omnia cœli terræque spatia videtur unus amplecti, tamen artem hanc externas res depingendi ab affectibus et moribus sejunctas, aut deesse ferme judico, aut ab eo contemptui haberi.*” That there are exceptions (amongst others, a passage quoted above\*) is admitted ; but the Bishop thinks that the picturesque was almost unknown before the Augustan period, and he dissects many of the Homeric descriptions with the view of proving this position. If by the term picturesque is here meant mere description of the inanimate imagery of nature, the Bishop’s position seems well-founded upon the whole ; but a writer is a picturesque writer who can stamp an action, can bring before the mind’s eye the doings of man or beast, so that you see them, and do not merely read of them. Beyond a doubt, Pindar is, in the severest sense, a picturesque poet. He is the most picturesque of the Greeks, as Dante is of all the moderns. But even in the narrower meaning of the term, the elder Latin poets, Ennius, Actius, &c., if we may judge by their

\* M’. XII. 273.

fragments, and also Lucretius and Catullus, give clear proofs of a sense of the inanimate picturesque, and of a power of expressing it which the later Latin poets seem to me to have in few instances rivalled. Must not Cicero have had a very strong feeling of what we mean by the picturesque, when he wrote this well-known passage:—"Quæ species ac forma pugnae, quæ acies, quod remigium, qui motus hominum, qui ferarum, non ita expictus est, ut quæ ipse non viderit, nos ut videremus effecerit?" \*

It is worthy of remark, indeed, that nine tenths of the similes in Homer are taken from the motions and appearances of the animal creation; comparisons with images of inanimate nature are only scattered here and there. But few as they are, their fidelity is perfect, and the point of view and the colouring prove the eye and the hand of a master-genius. The second and third similes which we find in the *Iliad* are of this class. They are in the second book (for it is a curious fact, that the first book is without a single comparison), and deserve notice, because they together afford an example of a manner peculiar to Homer, with which much fault has been found by Terrasson, Cesarotti, and other critics of that school. The poet is describing the effect of Agamemnon's speech upon the assembled multitude:—

- (1) κινήθη δ' ἀγορῇ, ὡς κύματα μακρὰ θαλάσσης  
πόντου Ἰκαρίοιο, τὰ μὲν τ' Εὐρύς τε Νότος τε  
ῥορρ', ἐπαίξας πατρὸς Διὸς ἐκ νεφελῶν.
- (2) ὡς ὅ' ὅτε κινήσει Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λήϊον ἐλθὼν,  
λάερος ἐπαιγίζων, ἐπὶ τ' ἡμῶι ἀσταχύεσσιν·  
ὡς τῶν πᾶσ' ἀγορῇ κινήθη· τοὶ δ' ἀλαλητῶ  
νῆας ἐπ' ἐσσεύοντο.†

\* Tusc. Disp. lib. v. 39.

† *Il. B'. II. 144.*

The assembly was moved, as the huge waves of the sea under the blasts of the east and the south rushing down from the clouds; and as the standing corn bends under the violent impulse of the west; in such wise was the assembly moved—and the host, with a roar, poured forth towards the ships.

Two distinct movements are meant to be described; the first agitation caused by the speech, and then the universal inclination of all towards the shore. The Homeric manner is always to illustrate these successive appearances by distinct and successive similes; as here by the rising waves, and then by the ripe corn which we have all seen yield, as if with an inward current, to the breeze passing over it. The French critics of what was foolishly called the modern school, found great fault with this arrangement, and said that the poet ought to have devised one simile for both movements. But after having painfully read through the whole of the writings of Terrasson, La Mothe, Cesarotti, and their fellows, upon Homer, the only fitting answer which my contempt can supply is,—*Poetico sensu plane carent*:—

The following passage, which is well known, but not so well as its truth and beauty deserve, is another instance of a simile from inanimate nature:—

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστροι φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην  
φαίνεται ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἐπλετο νήνεμος αἰθὴρ,  
ἐκ τ' ἔφρανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαί, καὶ πρῶνες ἄκραι,  
καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόνθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερῷα γη ἄσπετος αἰθὴρ,  
πάντα δέ τ' εἶδεται ἄστροι· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν.\*

As when about the silver moon,  
when aire is free from winde  
And stars shine cleare, to whose sweet beams  
high prospects and the brows  
Of all steepe hills and pinnacles  
thrust up themselves for shows,

\* Ὁ. VIII. 551.



And even the lowly vallies joy  
 to glitter in their sight;—  
 When the unmeasured firmament  
 bursts to disclose her light,  
 And all the signs in heaven are seene,  
 that glad the shepherd's heart.

CHAPMAN.

It is certainly quite true, that throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—more especially in the former,—the inclination of the poet seems to be strongly towards images taken from living objects. The lion, the bull, the boar, the eagle, the serpent, are repeatedly introduced in varied aspects of action and repose; nor should this be a matter of surprise. For the narrative of the poems itself naturally led to such a selection, as may be seen by comparing the similes of the *Iliad* with those of any other properly heroic poem—upon this general principle, that we look to life for external motion and conflict; and to inanimate nature, for representations of mere station, form, and colour. Yet to those who will consider most of the Homeric similes with attention, it will appear that the picture drawn is not confined in the poet's mind to the principal figure, in the rude manner of an uncultivated describer, but takes in an accompaniment of objects marking the locality and the season with great clearness and harmony. For instance, in the very first simile which occurs in the *Iliad*, observe how minutely, accurately, and agreeably chosen are all the details of the miniature:—

ἥϋτε ἔθνεα εἴσι μελισσάων ἀδινάων,  
 πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομενάων,  
 βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ' ἀνθεσιν εἰαρινόῃσιν,  
 αἱ μὲν τ' ἐνθα ἄλγισ πεποτήσονται, αἱ δέ τε ἐνθα.\*

As when the bees' dense nations rise and rise  
 From the cleft rock, and cloud with life the skies,

\* II. B. II. 87.

In clusters hang o'er spring's unfolding flower,  
Sweep to and fro, and wind from bow'r to bow'r.

SOTHEBY.

I think no one who examines this simile—the hollow rock, the everlasting coming and going, the grape-like cluster, the spring flowers, and the mode of flight and motion, can doubt the poet's full sense of the picturesqueness of these minute parts of a common sylvan image. Is either of Virgil's parallelisms to be compared to it?

*Ac veluti in pratis ubi apes æstate serena  
Floribus insidunt variis, et candida circum  
Lilia funduntur; strepit omnis murmure campus.\**

Or,

*Qualis apes æstate nova per florea rura  
Exercet sub sole labor, cum gentis adultos  
Educunt fœtus; aut cum liquentia mella  
Stipant, et dulci distendunt nectare cellas;  
Aut onera accipiunt venientum; aut, agmine facto.  
Fervet opus, redolentque thymo fragrantia mella.†*

To me the Greek seems, in the strictest sense of the word, the most picturesque; it in itself creates a picture, and does not, as the Latin only does, contain matter for painting, that is, description alone. Without, then, claiming for Homer the praise of picturesqueness throughout, in the highest and most peculiar meaning of the word, we may fairly say that he is generally distinct and graphic in his descriptions of animated nature, and that in several particular instances he has struck out pictures of both animated and inanimate nature, which may bear comparison with those of any other poet, ancient or modern. Indeed, in reference to most of the poets who followed him, the superiority of Homer in this particular is

\* *Æn.* VI. 707.

† *Æn.* I. 430.

obvious ; and it is remarkable that those who in succeeding ages generally have come nearest to him have, almost without exception, been the earliest, or amongst the earliest, poets of their several countries. Lucretius, Dante, and our own famous Chaucer—who, in a more advanced stage of the metrical development of the English language, would have breathed the Homeric spirit within him more freely—have, each of them, painted nature with rival, but original, hands. It is this affectionate fellowship with the beautiful forms and groupings and harmonious colourings of nature, in all its appearances, that has flung such an unwithering freshness on images ancient as the hills and familiar as our own homes ; it is this that has dilated the minstrel bard or bards of a small and unlettered people into the master-poet of all the world ; this chiefly that has caused the tree of elder Greece to take second root in soils and under skies not its own, and has supplied moisture for those golden fruits and those springing flowers—fruits, wherein lieth *Nepenthe*—flowers, which are flowers of *Amaranth* !\*

\* “*Toutefois en jugeant Homère,*” says M. Schoell in his very learned and useful *History of the Greek Literature*, “*ne perdons pas de vue la différence qui existe entre notre siècle et les circonstances où étaient placés ses lecteurs ou auditeurs. Cette langue magnifique et harmonieuse dont tant de beautés nous échappent, était pour eux une langue vivante ; ces poésies respiraient le patriotisme le plus exalté ; elles reproduisaient aux auditeurs les exploits de leurs ancêtres ; elles nommaient les familles dont ils descendaient, les lieux où ils demeuraient ou auxquels le temps avait attaché des souvenirs qui flattaient leur ambition ; elles peignaient des mœurs qui étaient les leurs, des institutions sous lesquelles ils vivaient. Ces poésies étaient en même temps le code de leur religion et le plus ancien document de leur histoire, comme elles ont été pour eux et pour tous les temps subséquens la mesure de la perfection à laquelle il est donné à l’esprit humain de s’élever, et les modèles du bon gout.*” —*Tom. i. p. 130.*

Knowledge  
of the Arts.

But the *Iliad* is a storehouse of rude and imperfect Art,\* as it is a mirror of consummate Nature. "The elements of all the arts," says Quintilian, "are found in Homer;"† and, indeed, there is hardly a department of human labour and knowledge which, directly or indirectly, according to the measure of the times, is not introduced in the *Iliad*. What is so introduced bespeaks the accuracy of personal knowledge. The geography of Greece, as before remarked, and of the coasts of Asia Minor, is, upon the whole, remarkably exact; the acquaintance with Egypt and Phœnicia obvious, although probably founded on relation only; the wind, the waves, and the foam of the ocean, the motion, the sound, and the tackle of the ship, are described with the familiarity and the fondness of a frequent mariner.

The state of navigation in the Homeric age has been a subject of a good deal of discussion. The ships of that and a subsequent period were galleys with a single bench of oars, and one movable mast. Thucydides says they had no deck, but were entirely open. Perhaps this authority may be considered decisive, although the vessel built by Ulysses in the *Odyssey* seems to have been half-decked at least. From the same passage we learn that it was the practice to protect the rudder from the violence of the waves by a frame of wicker-work. No mention is made of metal bolts; the whole structure appears to have had none but wooden fastenings. The saw is not amongst the tools furnished by Calypso. The trees selected by Ulysses are the alder, the poplar, and the fir; and upon this it should be remembered that the Turkish and other Levantine ships are to this day constructed of the same materials, the hardness and

\* See Mitford's *History of Greece*, vol. i., where this subject is discussed, and the general results very well stated.

† *Lib. xii. 11. 21.*

durability of which species of timber are very superior in Greece and the islands to those of the same kind in northern Europe. Sounding is nowhere mentioned. The anchor, properly so called, was unknown. Ulysses, upon landing in the harbour of the Læstrygonian Æges, ties the prow of his ship by ropes to a rock, and the Phæacians weigh anchor by simply slipping the rope from the perforated mooring-stone on shore :—

πεῖσμα δ' ἔλυσαν ἀπὸ τρήτοιο λίθοιο.\*

If the stay was temporary, the stern of the vessel was steadied by letting down heavy stones into the water. These were metaphorically called *ἐὺναί*, beds :—

ἐκ οὗ ἐὺνάς ἔβαλον, κατὰ δὲ πρυμνήσι' ἔδησαν.†

But when a voyage was finally over, the vessel was drawn up on the shore, with the stern towards the land, and supported in an upright position by props, or a cradle running lengthwise.

νῆα μὲν οἷγε μέλαιναν ἐπ' ἡπείροιο ἔρυσσαν,

ὑψοῦ ἐπὶ ψαμάθοις, ὑπὸ δ' ἔρματα μακρὰ τάνυσσαν.‡

A naval engagement does not appear to have been known. Thucydides observes that the Bæotian vessels, which carried one hundred and twenty men each, were probably meant to be the largest in the fleet, and those of Philoctetes, carrying fifty each, the smallest. The average would be eighty-five, and Thucydides supposes the troops to have rowed and navigated themselves; and that very few, beside the chiefs, went

\* Od. N'. XIII. 77.

† Il. A'. I. 436.

‡ Il. A'. I. 485.

as mere passengers or landsmen. In short, we have in the Homeric descriptions the complete picture of an Indian or African war canoe, many of which are considerably larger than the largest scale assigned to those of the Greeks. If the total number of the Greek ships be taken at twelve hundred, according to Thucydides, although in point of fact there are only eleven hundred and eighty-six in the catalogue, the amount of the army, upon the foregoing average, will be about a hundred and two thousand men. The historian considers this a small force as representing all Greece;—Bryant, comparing it with the allied army at Plataea, thinks it so large as to prove the entire falsehood of the whole story; and his reasonings and calculations are, for their curiosity, well worth a careful perusal.

The art military of the Homeric age is upon a level with the state of navigation just described. Personal prowess decided everything; the night attack and the ambuscade, although much esteemed, were never upon a large scale. The chiefs fight in advance, and enact almost as much as true knights of romance. The siege of Troy was as little like a modern siege as a captain in the Guards is like Achilles. There is no mention of a ditch or any other line or work round the town, and the wall itself was accessible without a ladder. It was probably a vast mound of earth with a declivity outwards. Patroclus thrice mounts it in armour. The Trojans are in no respect blockaded, and receive assistance from their allies to the very end. The Homeric sword had an edge only, and no point; the *ἄνω* or javelin was a missile; the *δορὺ* or spear was hurled or used as a pike, according to the circumstances; the shield was not borne on the left arm as in aftertimes, but hung like a gorget or breastplate close to the body—a point to be remembered in reading some of the descriptions of combats in the Iliad. The Carians are said to have introduced the modern practice of bearing



the shield separately. There was no cavalry, although horsemanship was not unknown. The chariot was like a truck, open behind, and so light that it might be carried on a man's back; at least such seems to have been the case with the chariot of Rhesus, which Diomed thinks of bearing off himself:—

ἢ ὅγε δίφρον ἐλὼν, ὅθι ποικίλα τεύχε' ἔκειτο.  
ῥυμοῦ ἐξερύοι, ἢ ἐκφέρει, ὑψόσ' αἶρας.\*

No standards are mentioned, nor are trumpets or any other instruments of sound used in the Homeric action itself; but the trumpet was known, and is introduced for the purpose of illustration as employed in war.† Hence arose the value of a loud voice in a commander; Stentor was an indispensable officer, and *βοὴν ἀγαθὴν* was neither an inexpressive nor a trivial title of a superior chieftain. In the early Saracen campaigns frequent mention is made of the services rendered by men of uncommonly strong voices; the battle of Honain was restored by the shouts and menaces of Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed, and the Allah Acbar of a single formidable warrior was heard four hundred times in one of Ali's nocturnal engagements with the troops of the rebel or rival Moawiyah. It is obvious how much more probable—indeed possible—such incidents were before the use of fire-arms. The only machine we have mentioned is the well-known wooden horse—a sufficiently clumsy one certainly—and yet towns have really been taken by stratagems of the same kind, and scarcely superior to it. The romantic period to

\* Il. κ' X. 504.

† The only two passages are in the Iliad:—

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀριζήλη φωνή, ὅτε τ' ἴαχε σάλπιγξ  
ἄστν περιπλομένην δαίαν ὑπο θυμοραιστίων.

Il. ζ'. XVIII. 219.

ἀμφὶ δὲ σάλπιγξεν μέγας οὐρανός.

Il. φ'. XXI. 388.

which I just now referred affords a well authenticated example. In the reign of Omar, the second khaliff, Abu Obeidah, the Saracen general in Syria, took Arrestan in the following manner:—He requested and obtained leave of the governor to deposit in the town some old lumber, which impeded the rapidity of his march. Twenty large chests, with sliding bottoms, were filled with men, and carried into the castle, and Abu Obeidah then marched away, leaving Khaled only with some troops concealed in the neighbourhood to act in concert with the adventurers. When the Christians were assembled in the churches to return thanks for the departure of the enemy, Derar, Abdorrahman, and the other chiefs, made their way out of the chests, liberated their companions, seized the governor's wife, and got possession of the keys of the gates. One party surprised the great church, and raised the war cry, and Khaled soon came to their assistance. Arrestan was taken without further opposition.\* Homer is silent as to the use of watchwords or countersigns; and indeed, it seems clear from the night adventure of Diomed and Ulysses, that the Trojans, at least, had no sentinels of any kind. It is only in the contrary of this practice, and in the silence and order with which the Greeks advance to action, that any superiority of military discipline can be observed in one army over the other. It has been seen that Vico concludes, from a passage in the *Odyssey*, that poisoned arrows were employed in war; but it is certain that no allusion to that barbarous practice can be found in the *Iliad*, in which its existence is implicitly denied; nor does the passage in the *Odyssey* afford a much better proof as to common practice.†

In surgery, in agriculture of many kinds, in archi-

\* Ockley's *Hist. of the Saracens*. Omar.

† *Od. A'. I.* 260.

lecture, in fortification, in smith's and carpenter's work, the attainments of the age are accurately displayed, and yet with an ease and simplicity which indicate complete knowledge and long use. Homer, indeed, speaks of these things as a poet and a man of the world, showing that he knows them all, but is above dwelling or dogmatizing on any of them. In the didactic portion of the Hesiodic Works and Days, husbandry is taught for the use of farmers. Indeed that singular and venerable poem is of a species altogether different from the old heroic poetry.

In the early age in which the Iliad was composed, a poet must necessarily have possessed all the knowledge of men and things which was then attainable; for his very vocation consisted in pleasing and instructing all classes of society, and the natives of various islands or provinces through which he wandered. His character was pre-eminently that of a teacher, and no ignorance would have been excusable in one of such pretensions and of such advantages. Then there were no books from which information could be procured at second-hand, and it was this necessity of learning everything practically by seeing and hearing, that induced the clearness and force of description, which in the very highest degree are peculiar to Homer, but which, in different proportions, characterize the writings of the earlier and more popular poets of every nation. I cannot help once more earnestly recommending the student to observe and appreciate these qualities, which, more than any others, and now as much as ever, preserve from bad taste and obscure expression, which throw an air of nature and reality around fiction, remove the obstacles of national customs and peculiar manners, and make the poem of an individual bard acceptable to all mankind.

For genius of any kind, or in any age, is a being of an extremely tender and susceptible

Circumstance.  
of early Poets.

A Poet's  
Knowledge.

nature; its strength, temper, and dimensions depend much on external accident; it may be stifled in its birth, enervated in its nonage, or curtailed of its fair proportion by defect of education; it has no irresistible tendency towards maturity; it has no indefeasible claim upon immortality. Whether itself shall be consummate, or its creations everlasting, rests upon other causes besides the power of its own physical essence. It is not merely a tree, the fruits of which may be sweet or sour according to the measure of its cultivation; it is also not unfrequently a flower which dies or blooms as it is visited with blight, or fostered by the dews and gales of heaven. Genius, in its proper and original sense, is the power of creation or invention, as distinguished from discourse or reasoning upon admitted premisses: and knowledge of every sort, and in every degree, is, in its nature, a proper and, in a greater degree, a necessary, condition of the complete operation of genius. But if memory, sense, and judgment be necessary, as they surely are, to the full exercise of the powers of genius, then everything which strengthens, and everything which impairs, those faculties, must certainly, in like proportion, augment or diminish the force of invention.

If this be true of genius, as directing itself to other objects, such as history and philosophy separately taken, it is, if possible, more true, and certainly applies with more obvious clearness, to the case of genius in poetry. For poetry is the convergence, nay, the identity, of all other species of knowledge; it creates the individual to stand as the symbol of the universal, the finite for the infinite; it has to do not with men, but man; it is addressed to the great republican heart of the civilized world, and must therefore speak in the all-pervading language of essential human nature. No poet can be a great poet, but as being inclusively a naturalist and an historian in the light as well as the life of genuine philo-

sophy. All other men's worlds are the poet's chaos. He must be of imagination all compact : that is, all his powers of every sort must be concentrated into one, before his pen will be able to give to the airy forms of things unknown

“A local habitation and a name.”

His is that wondrously alchemic power which extracts and purifies and compounds the material drugs supplied by learning and research, and waves over them the wand of its enchantment, till, in the crisis of mental projection, they glance out embodied and transfigured into eternal images of light.

The greatest poets that have ever lived have, without exception, been among the wisest men of their times. I say wisest, because the word learned is often misunderstood : the wisdom of the poet may include more or less of book learning, as it may happen ; in the present age it must include some certainly : but the knowledge of the mind and its powers, of the passions and their springs, the love and study of the beautiful forms of the visible creation—this it is which can alone teach a man to think in sympathy with the great body of his fellow-creatures, and enable him to draw back the veil which different manners and various costume have spread over the unchangeable essence of humanity. In this sense it is most true that Homer and Dante and Milton were learned in an extraordinary degree ; but, more than all, that Shakspeare was the most learned man that ever lived, and was not directly inspired by heaven.

On the tip of his subduing tongue  
All kinds of arguments and question deep,  
All replication prompt, and reason strong,  
For his advantage still did wake and sleep,  
To make the weeper laugh, the laughter weep ;  
He had the dialect and different skill,  
Catching all passions in his craft of will,  
That he doth in the general bosom reign  
Of young, of old.

*Lover's Complaint.*

With regard to the language or dialect of the Iliad, it may, perhaps, be useful to say a few words, to guard the student against the errors and confusion which common lexicons and common editions have a tendency to create on this subject. It is a very usual way of speaking upon this subject to say, that in the Homeric poetry all the Greek dialects as known in after-times are promiscuously employed—that one word is Ionic for this, another word Attic for that, and so on;—whereas in fact such positions are as absurd, if the Iliad is supposed to be the work of a single author, as they are groundless even upon the hypothesis of Wolf. For what should we say of an Italian poet, seeking bread and fame by recitation, who should mix Venetian, Neapolitan, and Maltese in one stanza—or of a Spaniard, who should vary his Castilian with Galician and Catalanian—or of an Englishman, who should correct the monotony of his English by the alternate varieties of Somersetshire and Yorkshire, together with an infusion of broad Scotch? The absurdity is not greater than to suppose an individual Homer, under any probable circumstances of his age or times, to have recited in what we now call Doric, Æolic, Ionic, and Attic. The history of the Greek language is obscure: the designations of tribes and qualities have, perhaps, been metamorphosed into the names of persons, and that which was in fact a long and continuous course of operation may have been parcelled off into distinct acts and separate events. Premising this, I think it may be supposed that the ultimate foundation of Greek is Pelasgic, a leading shoot of the great Iapetic branch of language. Upon this stock was grafted the dialect of the Hellenic tribe; a distinct, but, as I conceive, equal descendant of the Iapetic or western form of speech. The result of the amalgamation or adjustment of these two constituents, or of the prevalence of one of them over the other, was a common language, which, whether it be



called Achæan, Danaïc, or Doric, must be considered as the immediate basis of Homeric Greek. It is not probable that any very definite subdivisions existed in this mother-tongue previously to the colonization of the coasts of Asia Minor, first by emigrants from the Peloponnesus, who were called Æolians, and subsequently by emigrants from Attica, who were called Ionians; and it may be presumed that the distinctions of Doric, Æolic, and Ionic denoted, previously to the emigrations to Asia, nothing more than the different settlements of the members of the same family or tribe of Hellen. In the *Iliad* the Athenians are expressly called Ionians.\* They were Attics by residence, Ionians by blood. Those therefore that abandoned Attica were afterwards exclusively known by their name of blood, and were thenceforth styled Ionians, and their colony *Ionía*; whilst, on the other hand, those who remained in Attica soon began to assume the characteristic name of Attics or Athenians. Still they all spoke the same language, the old Achæan or Danaïc, and it seems clear that it was from the colonists, and especially from the Ionians, that the first important refinements in the mother-tongue were derived. The commerce of the Ionians with, and their local contiguity to, the more civilized kingdoms of Asia, soon infused a new softness and flexibility into their language, and got rid of many of its old asperities. The Æolians made their improvements too, but retained many usages which were becoming obsolete in the rising dialect of the Ionians. The birth and growth of Attic were later, and founded on a much more general intercourse with foreign nations, and a more miscellaneous adoption of their idioms.† Meantime, the Doric of

\* N. XIII. 685.

† *Καὶ οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἰδίᾳ μᾶλλον καὶ φωνῇ καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ σχήματι χρώνται. Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ κεκραμένη ἐξ ὅλων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβαρῶν.* “The rest of the Greeks have a more peculiar dialect and mode of living; but the Athenians speak and live in

Laconia and Messenia may, perhaps, be considered as remaining the spring of the whole, much and variously refined in course of time, but still pre-eminently the mother-tongue of Greece. Now the Iliad is written in the softest and most improved Greek of the time,\* which was the Ionian; and those words and usages which have been called instances of other dialects, are really legitimate parts of the ancient common speech, and only became provincial or peculiar when subsequently dialects, properly so called, arose, and each retained idioms which, although rejected by the others, were yet equally the genuine offspring of the old and fundamental language. Hence *μητιέτα* is improperly styled Æolic for *μητιέτης*, *ήμερη* Ionic for *ήμερα*, *Μενέλεως* Attic for *Μενέλαος*, or *αὔτεον* Doric for *αὔτεον* or *αὔτοῦν*. All these forms were pure Ionian Greek, that is to say, the most refined and polished Greek of the day; but afterwards each of them, being retained exclusively by a single people, became the idiom of a particular dialect. No doubt the Homeric *αἰοῖδοι*, contemplated as, or actually being, a great primitive poet, wrought prodigious improvements in their native language; and although it is a figure of speech to say that Greek sprang completely formed from the mouth of Homer, as the fabled Minerva all-armed from the head of Jupiter, it is, no doubt, true, as in the cases of Dante and Chaucer, that

a manner mixed up from amongst the peculiarities of all the other Greeks, and even Barbarians.”—XEN. *de Rep. Ath.* 696. C.

\* “*Parens ac fons, e quo reliquæ omnes effluerunt, est lingua Homerica; quæ non e diversis dialectis et licentiis poeticis, ut grammatici somniarunt, conflata est; sed Achæorum vel Danaorum veterum sermo quotidianus et universalis fuit; quo, Homericis temporibus, omnia publica et privata negotia transigebantur, atque omnes sensus et affectus animorum exprimebantur. Eorum enim temporum homines neque lexica, neque grammatica, neque libros ullos habebant; quapropter, si poeta verba insolita, aut modos loquendi ab usu communi abhorrente in carminibus usurpasset, nemo auditorum intellecturus fuisset.*”—KNIGHT, *Proleg.* lxx.

a very remarkable refinement is to be dated from the composition of the first great poem in the language. The Greek of the *Iliad* is a language not yet wrought out into a subtilty equal to the expression of metaphysic abstractions ; but it seems equal to the expression of strong and distinct feeling of every kind ; and, indeed, when it is compared in this particular with the language of Nonnus, Quintus, and other imitators in the decline of Greek literature, it is curious to observe how infinitely more precise and appropriately shadowed the Homeric diction is of the two. The numerous particles, which so finely sustain and articulate the pulses of emotion in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, especially the former, are almost entirely lost and banished from the verses of the later heroic poets.\* And although the strict rules of grammatical concord and analogy, as understood in theory, are frequently violated, there are, perhaps, not more of these anomalies, if such they be, in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, than in the books of Thucydides, or than are to be found in every great writer in every language.†

As to the digamma, so much profound erudition has been lavished upon the subject by critics Digamma. of the very highest celebrity in the literary world, that

\* These particles have sadly puzzled some scholars, very scrupulous in giving a distinct translation of every word. A former head master of Eton is said to have invariably distinguished between σοι—"Sir, to you," and τοι—"at your service;" whilst *The Dean*, as Dr. Cyril Jackson is still called by old Christchurchmen, rendered Τρῳάσι; ῥα, by "the Trojans, God help them."

† In Thucydides every case, I believe, has been found used absolutely; but these and other usages in that great author, not consistent with the analogy of theoretic grammar, must not be set down to the score of incorrectness and want of purity of diction, but, as I believe, every scholar will confess, to our ignorance of the genius and full powers of this wonderful language. In particular, we evidently know very imperfectly the power of the participles, and their capacity of combination with the article. A page of Thucydides is enough to prove this to any scholar's mind.

it would, indeed, be worse than idle in me to pretend to enter into the question at length. A few points may, however, be stated, which it will be useful for the student to remember. The ancient Greeks prefixed to many words beginning with vowels a letter or mark, which from its shape (**F**), was called by the Grammarians digamma, or double gamma. According to Trypho,\* this letter was common to the Ionians, Æolians, Dorians, Laconians, and Bœotians; but, being preserved by the Æolians to a much later period than by the other more polished dialects of Greece, was always called the Æolic digamma. The character itself is not found in any manuscripts of ancient poets; but it is distinctly written on the Delian marble, discovered by Montfaucon in 1708, on some coins of the Greek town of Velia, in Italy, and in some other inscriptions, particularly on the one discovered by Gell, in 1813, near Olympia, in Elis, which is in the Æolic dialect, and is supposed to be dated about B. C. 615. This is so famous an inscription, and so perfectly well preserved, that it may be interesting to give it here. In more common characters, and divided into words, it runs thus:—

Α Φρατρα τοιρ ΦΑλειοις και τοις Ευ-  
 Φαιοις συμμαχια κ' εα εκατον Φετεια  
 αρχοι δεκατοι αι δε τι δεοι αιτε Φεπος αιτε Φ-  
 αργον συνεαν κ' αλαλοις τα τ' αλ και πα-  
 ρ πολεμο αι δε μα συνεαν ταλαντον κ'  
 αργυρο αποτινοιαν τοι Δι Ολυμπιοι τοι κα  
 δαλεμενοι λατρευομενον αι δε τιρ ταγ-

\* Προστίθεται δὲ τὸ δίγαμμα παρὰ τε Ἴωσι, καὶ Αἰολεῦσι, καὶ Δωριεῦσι, καὶ Λάκωσι, καὶ Βοιωτοῖς· οἷον ἄναξ, Ἰάναξ.—Πάθη λεξίων, 11.

Cicero, writing to Atticus, says—"Neque solum Romæ, sed etiam Deli, tuum digamma videram." Lib. ix. ep. 9.

On this the Abbé Mongault says—"Cicéron appelle les livres, où Atticus écrivait les sommes qu'il prêtait à intérêt *Digamma*, parce que le Digamme des Eoliens avait la même figure qu'une F Latine, qui est la première lettre du mot *Fanus*, usure."

ραφειαται κα δαλειοιτο αιτε Γετας αιτε τ-  
ελεστα αιτε δαμος εν τ' επιαροι κ' ενεχ-  
οιτο τοι νταυτε γραμενοι.

Which is thus written by Mr. Knight in the common dialect:—

Ἡ ῥήτρα τοῖς Ἑλλείοις καὶ τοῖς Εὐαίοις· συμμαχία ἂν εἴη ἑκατὸν ἔτεα, ἀρχῶν δεκάτῳ. εἰ δέ τι θέοι εἴτε ἔπος, εἴτε ἔργον, συνῆεν ἂν ἀλλήλοισι, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ παρὰ πολέμου. εἰ δέ μὴ συνῆεν, τάλαντον ἂν ἀργύρου ἀποτίνοιν τῷ Διὶ Ὀλυμπίῳ οἳ ἂν δεδηλημένοι λατρευομένων· εἰ δέ τις τὰ γραφείῃ τῇ ἂν δηλείοιτο εἴτε ἔτης, εἴτε τελεστήης, εἴτε ὄψιμος, ἐν τῷ ἐφιερείῳ ἂν ἐνέχοιτο τῷ ἐνταῦθα γεγραμμένῳ.

The substitution of the P for the Σ in *τοῖρ* and *τιρ* was pre-eminently a Laconism, but it was characteristic of the Æolic dialect also in general. Hence the labor, *labos*; honor, *honos*, &c., of the Latin. “The language of this treaty,” says Mr. Knight, “though more archaic than that of any other prose extant, is far less so than the Homeric tongue, not only in the abbreviations and contractions of the words, but in the application of the article to the proper names, both of the parties and the god; the general omission of which, according to the Latin, rather than the subsequent Greek, idiom is among the most curious, as well as most indisputable, proofs of the very remote antiquity of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, between which and every other Greek composition now extant, there seems to have intervened a chasm of darkness sufficient to change the idiom of speech, though the words generally continued.”

The digamma has been differently pronounced, as B, F, V, W—all of them cognate sounds of aspiration. As to mere form, there is a preponderance of evidence to induce us to believe that its power ought to be represented by the V. At least, it is quite clear that in *ὄψος vinum*,

οἶκος vicus, ἦρ ver, ἴς vis, οἷς vis, αἰὼν ævum, ὕλη\* sylva, &c., the power of the Greek digamma is uniformly rendered in Latin by a V. Whether the Latin V was sounded like F, as in High German, or near to B, as in Castilian, it is now impossible to say. But, however this may be, every mode in which the power of the digamma has been represented, leads to the belief, that it was a rough breathing; the oldest inscriptions show that numerous words were aspirated in the early ages, which were always pronounced with the lene breathing by the polite Greeks after the Persian wars; and it is according to the analogy afforded by all other literary languages in their progress towards euphony, that the aspiration of the initial vowel sounds should be gradually diminished in frequency and force. The very spelling of an old Italian, Spanish, or French author, if faithfully preserved, demonstrates this; and in no language is this tendency more clearly illustrated than in the descent of English. It is very probable, that the ancient Greek aspiration was much coarser and rougher than that preserved by the literary part of the nation in after-times; and it may have been accompanied by a burr, which would early induce the improvers of the language to soften it or discard it altogether. How can we else explain the fact, that the aspirate is strong enough in Homer to prevent the collision of concurring vowels, which it is unable to do in the Tragedians? That, abstractedly taken, the rough breathing is quite enough to support the hiatus of open vowels, needs not the obvious proof of our own ordinary diction in such phrases as a hero, a house, the hill, &c. Bentley supposed the character as well as the power to have existed in Homer's time, and proposed an edition of the Iliad

\* The young scholar should remark that the aspirate or rough breathing, of a word in one language is frequently *represented* by the hissing letter S in another, as here in sylva—ἵξ sex, ὑπὲρ super, ἑπτὰ septem, ὕς, sus, ἑ se, &c.



with the digamma prefixed—a proposition since carried into execution by Mr Knight; according to Dawes,\* however, the character itself was of subsequent creation, and the power alone was known at the date of the Homeric poems. It is, perhaps, reasonable to conjecture that if there were *any* written characters at that time, the digamma was amongst them; but that, when the Homeric rhapsodies were compiled or revised under Pisistratus and his sons, the power of the digamma having become nearly obsolete in the prevailing dialects, the character itself was entirely omitted.

Now there are numerous passages in the Homeric poems, in which the legitimate application of the digamma can hardly be questioned;† but the difficulty is, that there is scarcely one digammated word in Homer, with regard to which the use of the digamma is constant and without exception. Some of these apparent exceptions may be removed without much violence; but there are also many others which are so impracticable that Heyne and Mr Knight have recourse to the only effectual method, and expunge verse and passage together. "Αλις, εἴδω, οἴζοις, οἴνοις, are digammated with less interruption than any other words in the Iliad, but there are irremovable exceptions in each even of these instances. Perhaps, therefore, it may be a reasonable solution of this difficulty to suppose, that as in the course of refinement the most elegant dialects of Greece unquestionably got rid of this ancient prefix altogether, the Homeric poems were composed at a period when the use of it was still general, but yet beginning to be laid aside; and that, in fact, the application or non-application of it had become the subject of poetical licence—in some words its use, in others its omission, being the more common. That this must have been the exact state of the language

\* Miscell. Critic. iv.

† Matthiæ questions it; but see the remarks of the Editor of the English Translation of his Grammar.—41. xxxv.

with respect to the use of the digamma at *some* period before the age of Æschylus is certain—the supposition of its having been totally laid aside at any precise moment being obviously absurd; and we have already seen, that Ionian Greek would undoubtedly be the first to admit a change, which, from the circumstance of its entire adoption by the most cultivated and literary of the Greek states, I believe to have been a much greater improvement in euphony than is generally imagined.

Versifica-  
tion.

As to the versification of the Iliad, it may be truly said, that its metre is the best, and its rhythm the least, understood of any in use amongst the ancients. Whilst the trimeter acatalectic iambic was written with almost equal success by numberless Greek poets of different ages, not one ever maintained for twenty lines together the Homeric modulation of the hexameter. This is chiefly attributable to the rigorously artificial construction of the senarius, the technical rules of which, closely followed, would in all competent hands produce the same, or nearly the same, effect; whereas the variety of the rhythm of the Homeric hexameter is endless; and whilst the iambics of the Tragedians always put us in mind of the buskin and the mask, the verse of the Iliad seems the musical efflux of a minstrel whose unpremeditated songs are borne on the breeze-like tunings of a lyre. It is idle to attempt to lay down rules for the rhythm of the Iliad; those who have read the poem know and feel, though they cannot understand or imitate, its incomparable melody; and all the learning in the world on the subject of cæsura and arsis has no more enabled posterity to approach to the Homeric flow, than those who have laid out two dozen vessels on the lines of the Victory, have ever succeeded in making one to sail like that immortal ship.

Strongly it bears us along in swelling and limitless billows,  
Nothing before and nothing behind but the sky and the ocean.

COLERIDGE.

The specific excellence of the Homeric rhythm is its everlasting variety. The changes rung are miraculous. If rules could have defined and taught it, a man of so much skill as Apollonius would not have missed it so entirely. I do not here mention such writers as Tryphiodorus, Coluthus, and Nonnus, though I attribute much talent to the two former, and a high poetic genius to the last. These very late Greeks seem to have thought no rhythm worth adopting, but that of such a line as—

ἔξ ἀκαλαῤῥείπας βαθυῤῥόου ωκεανῶ.

Accordingly, the movement is all in solids; there is no fusion, and a wearisome monotony is the result. Quintus Smyrnaus is, by a great deal, the best imitator of the mere manner of the *Iliad*—he plays you the same tune; but it is on a fife, instead of a trumpet.

The last line of the *Iliad* is—

ὦς οἶγ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἑκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο—

literally rendered—

“ Thus they performed the funeral rights of Hector, tamer of horses.”

And Cowper says—“ I cannot take my leave of this noble poem without expressing how much I am struck with this plain conclusion of it. It is like the exit of a great man out of company whom he has entertained magnificently; neither pompous nor familiar; not contemptuous, yet without much ceremony. I recollect nothing amongst the works of mere man, that exemplifies so strongly the true style of great antiquity.” The conclusion of the *Paradise Lost* is not unlike:—

Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wiped them soon :  
The world was all before them, where to choose  
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:

They hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow,  
Through Eden took their solitary way.

And yet Cowper's supposition, that the manner of the termination of the Iliad was designed, seems a mere fancy ; for many a learned critic refuses the merit of the entire twenty-fourth book to the Homer of the rest of the poem, so that upon the allowance of such an amputation, the Iliad will end thus :—

ὥς ἔφατ'· οὐδ' ἀπύθησε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων.  
ὁῶκε δὲ Μηριόνη δόρυ χάλκεον· αὐτὰρ ὕγ' ἦρως  
Ταλθυσίῳ κήρυκε δίδου περικαλλὲς ἄεθλον.

Whether Cowper's commentary will apply to this mode of going off the stage as well as to the former, I cannot say ; perhaps, by the help of a little imagination and a strong wilfulness, it might be made to do so. I cannot bring myself to believe that there was any intention in the matter one way or other.

Such are the few points which I have thought  
*Conclusion.* worthy of the student's especial attention before and during his perusal of the Iliad. They are general in their nature, and affect the constitution and character of the whole poem. To point out beauties more particularly, would lead me far beyond the limits of this work, and that department of criticism forms one of the proper objects of the student's own taste and judgment. And so with regard to what may be called faults or imperfections. If I could ever think it consistent with true criticism, to examine the Iliad and Odyssey, more especially the former, upon such principles of method as would guide my judgment in a review of the *Æneid*, the *Jerusalem Delivered*, the *Lusiads*, or even the *Paradise Lost*, many passages might certainly be mentioned, which, if the *Diasceuaists* had omitted them, would never have been missed. I do not allude to the debates on Olympus, or the general

appearance and action of the gods and goddesses. Vico properly observes, that all this is harmonious, and was to have been expected in the Homeric system; and to the vapid censures of Terrasson, Cesarotti, and other like critics, I, for one, do not yield ground for a moment. But there are some passages which seem to me to injure the legitimate effect of the immediate context in which they occur. Why they should not be genuine, that is, ancient, coeval, and Homeric, has never been shown, perhaps, never can be; yet some of them look like interpolations, or the injudicious *spinnings out* of a shorter primitive text. I particularly note in this point of view, the speech of Nestor in answer to the pressing questions of Patroclus, when sent by Achilles to learn the name of a wounded individual,\* the dialogue between Meriones and Idomeneus,† much of the speech of Agamemnon at the reconciliation,‡ and much of that of Æneas to Achilles.§ Indeed, the whole thirteenth rhapsody of the exploits of Idomeneus does not advance the story; and there is a languor and disjointedness perceptible through the greater part of it. It is enough to have made these few remarks upon this point; if the true view of the Homeric poetry is once caught, a just discrimination of particular merits will follow of course. Something, indeed, must always be allowed for the natural diversities of temper and intellect in different persons. We all have our favourite poets and our favourite passages, but a well-disciplined mind will neglect nothing that is excellent in its kind: and as it was once said, that he who was much pleased with Cicero might be assured that he had made no small proficiency in learning and literature; || so, with equal truth may it be declared that a person, who upon distinct principles

\* Λ'. XI. 669.

† M'. XIII. 249.

‡ Γ'. XIX. 78.

§ Γ'. XX. 260.

|| Quinct. x. l. 112. "Ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero valde placebit."

heartily admires the catholic spirit of the Iliad and Odyssey, will find himself implicitly endowed with a superior insight into the merits of almost every other poet :—

*αὐτίκα δ' ἥερα μὲν σκέδασε, καὶ ἀπῶσεν ὁμίλῳ, ἥλιος δ' ἐπέλαμψε.\**

The darkness and the mist are put to flight,  
And the great sun shines on him with his light.

\* P'. XVII. 649.



## INTRODUCTION TO THE ODYSSEY.

THAT the Odyssey is not of the same age, or by the same hand or hands, as the Iliad, is one of the positions of the German theory, which, though at variance with the prevalent belief\* of ancient and modern times, has been countenanced by many great scholars as probable, if not absolutely demonstrated. This opinion is founded on the striking discrepancy as to the wife of Vulcan, who in the Iliad † is Charis, and in the Odyssey ‡ is Venus; on the appearance of Mercury § as the constant messenger of Olympus, to the exclusion of Iris, who almost constantly acts that part in the Iliad; || on the change in the forms of many words; on the decreased simplicity of the manners, and on the altered aspect of the mythology.

\* It was, however, a question. "Græcorum iste morbus fuit, querere quem numerum remigum Ulysses habuisset, prior scripta esset Ilias an Odyssea; præterea an ejusdem esset auctoris."—SENECA *de Brev. Vit.* c. 13.

† Il. Σ'. XVIII. 382–3. ‡ Od. Θ'. VIII. 269. § E'. V. 29.

|| In the last book of the Iliad, Mercury is employed to conduct Priam in safety to the Greek camp; and this use of Mercury has been adduced among the arguments for the spuriousness, as it is called, of the whole book. But it is to be observed that Mercury acts, in this instance, in his proper character of conductor, and that, in the very same book, Iris is sent as the mere messenger. Mercury is deputed to *do* something. In the Iliad, B'. II. 649, Crete is represented as containing one hundred cities; in the Odyssey, T'. XIX. 174, the number is ninety. In the Iliad, A'. XI. 692, Neleus is said to have had twelve sons; in the Odyssey, A'. XI. 285, it seems as if he had only three, and one daughter.

These latter points of difference have been already very strongly laid before the reader in the extract from Vico, and some of them will be more particularly mentioned in the course of this Introduction; and though it would not become me to pronounce a peremptory decision on this question, I cannot help owning that I never read a book of the *Odyssey* without being more and more convinced that a considerable number of years must have intervened between the composition of the two poems.\* It should be remarked, too, that, in every instance of difference, the statement in the *Odyssey* is invariably that which agrees with the finally prevailing habits and creed of succeeding ages.†

Manners. It is true, indeed, that the Manners of the *Odyssey* rest upon the same heroic base as those of the *Iliad*; whatever variation in degree may be observed between them, there is no difference in kind; and these two wonderful poems present to us, respectively, pictures of the maturity and decline of that primitive system, which holds something like the same relation to the matured civilization of ancient times, that Chivalry does to the manners of modern Christendom. The active and, what may be called, exclusive, existence of either of those two systems was not very long lived; but the impression made by each on the world was pre-eminently enduring; and all the serious poetry of the ancients in after-times continued to be grounded on the fables, and to imitate the spirit, of their heroic age, not less than the most noble, as well as the most sprightly poetry of Europe, since the revival

\* There are about 1000 lines identical in the two poems, and it is plain, upon a collation of such passages as *Od.* A'. I. 356, with *Il.* Z'. VI. 490, and *Od.* E'. XIV. 156, with *Il.* I'. IX. 312, that the verses in the *Odyssey* are a modification of those in the *Iliad*.

† Virgil's occasional use of Iris as messenger in the *Æneid* is a plain imitation of the *Iliad*. There are authorities enough to show that in his time Mercury was the popular courier of Olympus, as he is in the *Odyssey*. *Hor. Carm.* lib. i. 10.

of letters, has been constructed on the tales, inspired with the sentiments, or adorned with the fictions, of Chivalrous Romance. The manners and occupation of Nausicaa,\* the comparison of Minerva† with a youthful shepherd of royal blood, and many other instances, sufficiently demonstrate the continued existence, in striking particulars, of that Oriental simplicity which is so characteristic of the *Iliad*; and the whole tenor of the poem is such as to demand a patient and single-hearted perusal, and a total rejection of all associations with modern fashions and artificial modes of feeling. Yet it cannot be denied, that the *Odyssey* does also betray the fact of an advance in the refinement, or at least in the complication, of society; and there is a sort of conflict observable in many parts of the poem between the genuine heroic manners and the apparently encroaching habits of a more modern system. Telemachus, Pisistratus, the Court of Alcinous, and the Suitors of Penelope, seem removed to the third or fourth generation from the godlike warriors who fought on the Plain of Troy; they appear as much astonished at the strength and courage of those heroes as we are ourselves; and there is a confession of inferiority and degeneracy in the *Odyssey*, which forms a striking contrast with the haughty and successful pretensions so often asserted in the *Iliad*.

οὐδέ τις ἡμείων δύνατο κρατεροῦ βιοῦ  
νευρὴν ἐπτανύσαι, πολλὸν δ' ἐπιδευέες ἤμεν,‡——

—— No suitor there had power  
To overcome the stubborn bow, that mock'd  
All our attempts, ——

COWPER.

is the acknowledgment of Amphimedon; whilst Sthene-

\* *Od.* ζ'. VI. 72.

† *Od.* ν'. XIII. 221. It is observable that brothers and sisters are represented without any particular remark, as intermarrying in the Hall of Æolus. *Od.* κ'. X. 7.

‡ *Od.* ω'. XXIV. 169.

lus, speaking with direct reference to the most celebrated warriors before the Trojan era, says—

ἡμεῖς τοι πατέρων μέγ' ἀμείνονες εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι,\*——

We, with our sires compared, superior praise  
Claim justly,——

COWPER.

and

τῷ μὴ μοι πατέρασ ποθ' ὁμοίῃ ἔνθεο τιμῇ.†

Their glory, then, match never more with ours.

COWPER.

So in the general demeanour of Telemachus towards his mother (though he is certainly intended to be set forward as an example of filial dutifulness), there is a peremptoriness, if not harshness, of manner, which seems to savour of that spirit of comparative neglect and postponement with which the maternal relationship was generally treated amongst the Greeks of the subsequent ages. The Tragedians, especially Euripides, carried the superior claims of the father to filial allegiance, on the score of *ownership*, to a most extraordinary height. We may be sure that Euripides did not indulge his supposed misogynism beyond the taste of his audience. See in particular the speech of Orestes in his play of that name, v. 537; in which, however, a similar passage in the Eumenides of Æschylus, v. 654, is probably imitated. The respectful tone of Hector, especially when his age and eminence are considered, is in remarkable opposition to this. Again, with the single exception of Helen, whose character is touched with the same pre-eminent delicacy that is so conspicuous in the Iliad, the women of the Odyssey discover occasionally a modernism and a want of *heroic* simplicity, which is more easily felt during an attentive perusal than instanced by the citation of particular passages.

\* Il. Δ'. IV. 405.

† Il. Δ'. IV. 410.

The women of the *Odyssey* are indeed very different persons from those of the Greek Drama; nevertheless, the first symptoms of a change in the tone of national society towards them are mixed up in the *Odyssey* with the still more prevailing habits and sentiments of an elder age. It may be worth while also to observe the different economy of the households of Penelope\* and of Laertes,† and to consider them as representing in some degree the later and the elder system; to observe the separation and subordination of the slaves, and the organized service of the one, and the familiarity and almost equal ministry of master and servant in the other.

But to whatever extent, if at all, we may be inclined to admit that the manners of the *Odyssey* are of a more modern cast than those of the *Iliad*, it is impossible not to perceive the striking change in the action and character of the mythological machinery of the former poem. In the *Iliad*, not only is the final fall of Troy itself the understood consequence of the determined will of Jupiter, but every battle is lost or won, every warrior kills or is killed, wounds or is wounded, stands still or advances, in obedience to the same overruling power: the gods themselves fight or not as he lets them loose;‡ they tremble at his menaces, and dare not reply to his tremendous challenge:§ he plays the game of the war alone, and it is only whilst passion and sleep hold him for a season entranced in the recesses of Mount Ida,|| that even Neptune breaks through his awful command. But in the *Odyssey* the action of Jupiter is faint and partial; he says but little and directs still less; once or twice he appears indistinctly and for a brief space, and at a remote distance from the Earth and its affairs; and throughout these passages,

Mythology.

\* *Od.* passim.

† *Il.* γ'. XX. 24.

|| *Æ.* XIV. 352.

† *Od.* Ω'. XXIV. 360-397.

§ *Il.* ε'. VIII. 18-28.

and indeed throughout the poem, the governing supremacy of Jupiter is less striking, and the individual personality of the gods less sensible, whilst something of the blissful inactivity of an Epicurean heaven seems to have become the portion of all the fierce and ever-restless divinities of the *Iliad*. Minerva alone interferes with any effect in the conduct of the poem; but how different a being is she here from the strong and dreadful Pallas of the *Iliad*! She is ever at the ear or in the mind of Ulysses, more like his familiar spirit than a directing goddess; her bodily lineaments are so indistinctly drawn, and her personal presence so little felt, that it is often difficult to consider her in any other light than as the allegorized understanding or reasoning faculty; and though Eustathius and the Scholiasts do certainly not allow for some necessary and evident exceptions to this line of interpretation, the student will, probably, in most instances, be content to acquiesce in it, and will at least perceive with how much more probability it may be applied in general to the superhuman machinery of the *Odyssey* than to that of the *Iliad*.

*Apotheosis.* Another very remarkable feature of distinction in the *Odyssey* is the appearance, for the first time, of the system of apotheosis of acknowledged mortals; a doctrine which became strictly orthodox in later ages, and remained so till the establishment of Christianity, but of which no traces whatever are perceptible in the *Iliad*. This is so singular an innovation, that it deserves very particular attention, and may seem almost to demonstrate the fact of a considerable lapse of time from the composition of the elder poem. In the *Iliad*, Castor and Pollux are mentioned in the ordinary language denoting common death and burial, and no more;—

τοὺς δ' ἤδη κάπεχε φύσιζος αἶα  
ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.\*

\* Il. r'. III. 243.



But they long since under life-breeding earth  
In Lacedæmon lay, their place of birth.

In the *Odyssey* we have the account of their alternate resuscitation, which finally became the popular fable :—

τοὺς ἄμφω ζωοὺς κατέχει φυσίζοος αἶα·  
οἳ καὶ νέρθεν γῆς τιμὴν πρὸς Ζηνὸς ἔχοντες,  
ἄλλοτε μὲν ζώουσ' ἐτερήμεροι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε  
τεθνῶσιν· τιμὴν δὲ λελόγγχας ἴσα θεοῖσιν.\*

They prisoners in the fertile womb of earth,  
Though living, dwell, and ever there from Jove  
High privilege gain;—alternate they revive  
And die, and dignity partake divine.

COWPER.

So in that uncommonly splendid passage in the *Necyomanteia* which has been called spurious, where Ulysses sees Hercules, the apotheosis of the hero is expressly mentioned, and the inconceivable distinction between the *Idolon* and the *Self* of the translated mortal is laid down :—

εἰσενόησα βίην Ἑρακληΐην,  
εἶδωλον.—αὐτὸς δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι  
τέρπεται ἐν θαλίῃ, καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφρον Ἥην,  
παῖδα Διὸς μεγάλῳ καὶ Ἑρῆς χρυσοπέδιλου.  
ἄμφι δέ μιν κλαγγὴ νεκύων ἦν, οἰωνῶν ὥς,  
πάντοσ' ἀτυζομένων· ὁ δ', ἐρεμνῇ νυκτὶ εἰκῶς,  
γυμνὸν τόξον ἔχων, καὶ ἐπὶ νευρῇφιν ὄϊστον,  
δεινὸν παπταίνων, αἰεὶ βαλέοντι εἰκῶς.†

The might of Hercules I, next, survey'd—  
His semblance;—for himself their banquet shares  
With the immortal gods, and in his arms  
Enfolds neat-footed Hebe, daughter fair  
Of Jove and of his golden-sandal'd spouse.  
Around him, clamorous as birds, the dead  
Swarm'd turbulent:—he, gloomy-brow'd as night,  
With unceasing bow and arrow on the string,  
Peer'd terrible from side to side, as one  
Ever in act to shoot.

COWPER.

\* *Od.* *Λ'*. *XI.* 300.

† *Od.* *Δ'*. *XI.* 600.

But in the *Iliad*, although Hercules and his exploits are repeatedly mentioned, and sometimes under circumstances which would seem almost necessarily to call for an allusion to his apotheosis, as in the dialogue between Sarpedon and Tlepolemus,\* there is no expression to denote a belief in any such extraordinary event; whilst, on the contrary, he is constantly mentioned as a man, and classed with the other heroes of the preceding age. The demigod is evidently a subsequent creation, and in this as well as in every other instance of discrepancy or change in the two poems, we find that the *Iliad* is the most distant from, and the *Odyssey* the nearest to, the known opinions and habits of the post-Homeric age.

Oracle at Delphi. In Mr. Knight's opinion† the *Oracle* of Apollo at Delphi was not in existence when the *Iliad* was composed. Herodotus says it was the *only* Oracle in action at that time.‡ It seems a doubtful point. The Oracle of Jupiter at Dodona appears to be expressly mentioned,§ and the splendour and riches of the *Temple* of Apollo at Delphi are certainly described|| as proverbial; but in the *Odyssey*, at least, we have an unequivocal proof of the notoriety of the Pythian Oracle, and the appropriate terms of vaticination used with the distinction well known in after-times:—

"Ως γάρ οἱ χρείων μυθήσατο Φειδός Ἀπὸ δ' ἑλὼν  
Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθ' ὑπέρεβ' ἀϊνον οὐδὸν  
χρησίμευσε.¶

\* Il. E'. V. 633.

† Euterp. 52.

|| Il. I'. IX. 404.

† Prolegomena in Hom.

§ Il. II'. XVI. 235.

¶ Od. Θ'. VIII. 79. It may be worth observing, that throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* Phœbus is never mentioned as identical with the sun, or as having anything to do with it; as in the more modern mythology. The sun ("Ἡλιος") is always introduced distinctly, and almost always as the natural body only. Il. P'. XVII. 649. Od. Θ'. VIII. 302, and see verse 323, where Apollo

“For so Apollo, *answering oracularly*, declared to him when he crossed the marble threshold, for the purpose of *consulting the oracle*.”

But the most remarkable passage in the whole <sup>Necyoman-</sup>Odyssey for the aspect which it presents of its <sup>teia.</sup> mythology, is that magnificent tale of the Necyomanteia, or intercourse of Ulysses with the shades of the dead.\* It is very easy to call the whole or any part of this singular description spurious, and certainly the passage, as a whole, is so conceived as to admit of parts being inserted or expunged without injury to its general consistency or entireness; but those who remember the history of the collection of the Homeric poems, as previously stated in this work, will probably think it very idle to pretend to put out a few lines here and there, which may seem to bear marks of modern invention. The Necyomanteia, as a whole, appears to have just as good a right to be called Homeric as any other part of the Odyssey, and it is the conception of it, as a whole, to which I would call the attention of the student. The entire narration is wrapped up in such a mist—it is so undefined and absolutely undefinable in place, time, and manner—that it should almost seem as if the uncertainty of the poet's own knowledge of the state and locality of the dead were meant to be indicated by the indistinctness of his description. Ulysses sails all day from the dwelling of Circe with a north wind; at sunset he comes to the boundary of the ocean, where the Cimmerians dwell in cloud and darkness and perpetual night; here he goes ashore, and proceeds to a spot described by Circe, digs a trench, pours certain libations,

is evidently in another interest. In the Odyssey, the sun is twice mentioned as a mythological personage. M'. XII. 133–376. The later Greeks seem to have consolidated three gods into one; for Παιήων, the physician of the gods, was originally as clearly distinguished from Apollo as Πηλεΐδης.

\* Od. A'. XI.

and sacrifices sheep in it, calls upon the dead to appear, draws his sword, and awaits the event. Immediately the manes or shades assemble around the trench, each thirsting for the sacrificial blood, from which they are repelled by the sword's point, till Tiresias has appeared and drunk his fill. It is difficult to determine the real nature of this grand and solemn scene, and to say whether Ulysses is supposed himself to descend to Hades or only to evoke\* the spirits, as the woman of Endor is commonly understood to have evoked Samuel. Æneas, we know, actually descends and ascends; and Lucian, in a piece† founded entirely on this Necyomanteia, evidently takes the hero to have visited the infernal regions in person. In many passages it seems necessary so to understand it; Ulysses *sees* Minos administering justice amongst the dead; he *sees* Orion hunting, Tityus tormented by vultures, Tantalus standing in the lake, and Sisyphus up-heaving his stone; he *sees* the asphodel meadow, and Achilles asks how he has dared to *descend* to Hades, *where* the shades of men dwell. Yet, upon a careful consideration of the beginning and conclusion of the passage, it will, I think, appear plain that no actual descent, such as that of Æneas in the Æneid, was in the contemplation of the original poet; but that the whole ground-plan is that of an act of Asiatic evocation only; and Lucian, who, in his piece, combines the Homeric rites of evocation with an actual descent, makes the evocator a Babylonian and disciple of Zoroaster, and lays the scene somewhere on the banks of the Euphrates. The whole of this Necyomanteia is indeed of a character quite unique in Greek poetry; and is, amongst other things, remarkable for the dreary and even terrible revelation which it makes of the con-

\* ——— cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde  
Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas.

HOR. Sat. I. viii. 28.

† Necyomanteia.

dition of the future life. All is cold and dark ; hunger and thirst and discontent prevail ; we hear nothing of Elysian fields for piety, or wisdom, or valour ; and there is something quite deadening in the answer of the shade of Achilles to the consolations of Ulysses :—

μη δὴ μοι θάνατόν γε παραύδα, φαίδιμ' Ὀδυσσεύ·  
βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάροχρος ἔδην θητεύεμεν ἄλλῃ  
ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ὃ μὴ βίοςτος πολὺς εἴη,  
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισι ἀνάσσειν.\*

Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,  
Nor think vain words (he cried) can ease my doom.  
Rather I choose laboriously to bear  
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,  
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,  
Than reign the sceptred monarch of the dead.

BROOME.

This is one of the passages which called down the censure of Plato;† and indeed, how cheering a contrast to this gloomy picture is presented by the gentle and pious imagination of Pindar ! ‡ A curious particular in

\* Od. A'. XI. 487.

† Republ. III.

‡ ἴσον δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,  
ἴσα δ' ἐν ἡμέραις ὀλί-  
ον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον  
ἔσθλοὶ νέμονται βί-  
ον.

*Olymp.* II. 109.

By night, by day,  
The glorious sun  
Shines equal, where the blest,  
Their labours done,  
Repose for ever in unbroken rest.

In a previous passage, the Elysian plain is described in very different language, and placed in some remote part of the earth. Are the descriptions inconsistent, or is the Elysium of the Odyssey a distinct place from the asphodel meadow of Hades?

ἀλλὰ σ' ἐς Ἥλύσιον πεδίον καὶ πείρατα γαίης  
ἀθάνατοι πύμπουσιν, ὅθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθυς  
πῇ περ ῥηῖσται βιοτὴ τέλει ἀνθρώποισιν·  
οὐ νιφετός, οὐτ' ἄρ' χειμῶν πολὺς, οὐτι πόντος ὄμβρος,

this scene, not unknown in other superstitions, should be observed—that most of the ghosts, fleshless and boneless though they be, cannot recognise or speak to Ulysses until they have drunk of the blood in the trench. Even his mother does not know him before she has slaked her thirst.

The plan and contexture of the *Odyssey* are materially different from those of the *Iliad*, and the difference seems to import a great advance in the art of composition. In this poem the order of narration is no longer confined to the straight-forward line of a single series of events, as in the *Iliad*; but we have two corresponding, though distinct, parts, proceeding at first in parallel directions, but at length meeting and constituting the entire body of the story in the house of Eumæus. It is possible that many who are inclined to doubt the individual authorship of the *Iliad*, may maintain that of the *Odyssey*. It does not appear to me that there would be any open inconsistency in so doing. The composition is dissimilar, and there are sufficient

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ἀλλ' αἰεὶ Ζεφύροιο λιγυπνεύοντας ἀήτας  
Ὀκεανὸς ἀνέκισιν, ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους.—Δ'. IV. 563, 568.

Thus beautifully translated by Abraham Moore:—

Thee to the Elysian plain, earth's farthest end,  
Where Rhadamanthus dwells, the gods shall send;  
Where mortals easiest pass the careless hour;  
No lingering winters there, nor snow nor shower;  
But Ocean ever, to refresh mankind,  
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind.

Bochart derives Ἠλύσιον from the Phœnician *Elysoth*—Joy. It is clear, upon a long comparison, that almost all the Homeric names of places or persons westward of Greece, are Phœnician in their etymology; indeed it was probably from the Phœnicians alone that any Greek of the age of Homer could learn anything about them. Cadiz and the plains of Andalusia may perhaps be thought to have some claim to be the Phœnician original of the Homeric Elysium. It is evidently placed far in the west; and even to this day it is said that the Moors of Africa pray every Friday to be restored to the Paradise of Granada and Malaga.



reasons of a moral nature in the manners of the poem, for assigning a considerably later age to it. The critics who separate the authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, differ in their estimate of the length of time intervening between the composition of each. Mr Knight, as we have seen, thought nothing less than the lapse of a century could account for the refinement or alteration of the manners; Mr Milman seems to adopt a smaller period. Of the two, I should incline to the longer interval; because, to judge by the history of other countries in analogous states of civilization, the progress is very slow indeed from the first feudal or clannish period up to the establishment of commerce and municipal institutions. After that point is attained, the development goes on at a greatly accelerated speed. Now certainly that point had not been attained when the principal parts of the *Odyssey* were composed; nor, as may be believed, for a considerable time afterwards. Piracy was still strictly honourable. Nestor, after having feasted the unknown Telemachus and Pisis-tratus, proceeds at length to ask who and what they are:—

νῦν δὲ κάλλιστόν ἐστι μεταλλῆσαι καὶ ἔρεσθαι  
 ξείνους, οἵτινές εἰσιν, ἐπεὶ τάρπηραν ἐδωδῆς.  
 ὦ ξῆνοι, τίνας ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθ' ὑγρὰ κέλευθα;  
 ἢ τί κατὰ πρῆξιν, ἢ μαψιδίως ἀλάλησθε,  
 οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ὑπεὶρ ἄλλα, τοί γ' ἀλόωνται  
 ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι, κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες; \*

We need not be much surprised that so rough a host as Polypheme should ask the same question in the same words;† but it is a very remarkable proof of the creditable character of this occupation, that the disguised Ulysses should acknowledge to Antinous that the cause of his misfortunes was his failure in a piratical expedition:—

\* I'. III. 69.

† I'. IX. 252.

ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς ἀλ' ἀπαΐξει Κρονίων (ἥθελε γάρ πού)  
 ὅς μ' ἄμα ληϊστῆρσι πόλυστ' ἀγχιτοισιν ἀνῆκεν  
 Ἀργυροτόνδ' ἰέναι.\*

Indeed, the local position of the Greek settlements would naturally keep piracy in honour longer than might have been the case amongst a people less favourably situated for its exercise. Some of the best bred Greeks are pirates at this day, or at least are concerned in the profits of that species of trade. It is possible, therefore, that the *Odyssey* may have been the composition of a poet living at a time in which the facilities for writing had greatly multiplied, although many of the customs and ordinances of an earlier age were still in partial force. And one thing does undoubtedly seem beyond dispute, that, even upon the Wolfian hypothesis, the separate constituent parts of the *Odyssey* must be admitted to be in themselves larger and more continuous than those of the *Iliad*. But, with this admission, I must acknowledge that the preponderance of the evidence to my present judgment is, that the *Odyssey*, as one poem, has been constructed out of poetry not originally conceived *uno flatu*, although, no doubt, as with that of the *Iliad*, it was conceived *uno intuitu*. When such very considerable portions of the poem are cut away as spurious by those who still contend for the individual authorship of what they leave,—what reliance can any longer be put in the ancient tradition and belief of the total unity? The portions so rejected are confessedly not of modern invention; they formed part of the *Odyssey* known to Plato, and Aristophanes, and Herodotus: no one can show a time in which they did not form a part of that poem. If we reject them, therefore, we do so against all external evidence, which is as strong for them as for any other equal number of verses throughout the work. It may be true that cer-

tain verbal or metrical peculiarities indicate a later age in the rejected passages ; but how much later are they ? and why are the rare and indistinct modernisms of language so largely credited as evidence, whilst no attention is paid to those numerous and prominent proofs of variety in the date of the composition of other parts of the *Odyssey*, which may be drawn from the contrasts of luxury and refinement with ignorance and grossness ? That some parts of the *Odyssey*—and, amongst them, the parts rejected by Mr Knight—are later in date than other parts of the poem, is very probable ; but it is equally true, that the same thing may be said of other passages not rejected by the critics ; and the propriety of calling such passages spurious, depends entirely upon the view taken of the origin of the poem as a whole. According to Vico or Wolf, you can no more call this or that passage of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* spurious, because it was contributed at a later period than any other part before the age of Pisistratus, than you could so brand the successive additions or corrections of an individual author in his own work.

It is indeed maintainable, as has been intimated before, that the separate constituent parts of the *Odyssey* are longer in themselves than those of the *Iliad* ; and that the whole poem, as referring to the adventures of a single person, is more linked and continuous throughout, than can be truly predicated of the vast chronicle of the heroes before Troy. The artificial manner in which the narrative by Ulysses of his adventures is managed, its introduction, its breaks, its references to what has gone before, and its intimations of what is to follow, are all striking instances of a refinement in art in the poet ; whilst at the same time the incomparably natural air which surrounds the whole scene, the apparent veracity and personal feeling of the speaker, and the impression made on the audience, stamp upon this episode an originality and real interest which render it

by far the most delightful, as it is by far the most ancient, of these subsequently favourite complements of the heroic poem. The perfect propriety and easy order of the greater part of the *Odyssey* are in most agreeable contrast with all the many servile imitations in the epic poems of subsequent ages; narrative and dialogue alternate precisely as the exigencies of a story, conceived in a true spirit of nature, and told exactly as a man of imagination would tell a romantic matter of fact, seem to require; and the comparative absence of mere poetic splendour renders more apparent and more fascinating the great and peculiar charm of this delightful poem—its uncommon air of truth and reality. Indeed it is as a book of adventures that the *Odyssey* is presented to us in its proper and most pleasing light; it is, in fact, of the same nature, and possesses the same interest, as *Robinson Crusoe*, or *Sinbad the Sailor*, but heightened by a purpose, and dignified by a morality, infinitely transcending the reach of those two favourite compositions. Hence it may be observed, that, whilst in the *Iliad* we are for the most part sensible of a prominence of the *poetry* as such, to that degree that almost any single book or rhapsody may be read with perfect delight, without reference to anything that has gone before or is to follow, the very passage we are repeating completely satisfying the mind by its nobleness of sentiment, its picturesqueness of imagery, or even its melody of words; in the *Odyssey*, on the contrary, though it contains many instances of extraordinary vigour of conception and splendour of verse, we are more constantly attracted, and our attention more completely kept alive, by the linked sweetness and long drawn-out interest of the story itself; our curiosity or our affections being in turn or together so delightfully stimulated and gratified, that, even where the higher powers of the imagination are not put forth, we lose all unpleasant sense of their abeyance in the perception of

a gentler, a more continuous, and a more varied pleasure.

Never was there a tale in verse or prose told with such consummate art; yet the hand of the artist is invisible. The conduct of the story seems, and is, simple and single; but it is the simplicity and singleness of Nature, which co-exists with, indeed is the wondrous effect of, an endless complexity of parts:—

——— “*sudet multum, frustra que laboret*  
Ausus idem.”

Nowhere is this charm so strongly felt, as in that delightful part of the poem in which Ulysses is lodged in the house of the faithful Eumæus; there is that singular grace in the description of the rustic occupations and the rustic mansion, that dignity in the swineherd, that native tone of command in Telemachus, and that sportive humility varying with a mysterious majesty in Ulysses, which seem quite beyond the reach of the most poetic invention or the most ingenious imitation. The air of reality around the whole scene is such, that it is scarcely possible to doubt that the poet wrote under the control of actual life, and that the picture itself is in this respect a mere stamp or reflection of contemporary society. In the *Æneid* and in every other heroic poem, composed in an age long subsequent to that in which the action of the story is supposed to have taken place, the greatest difficulty in the poet's way may be said to lie in a consistent adaptation and a natural propriety of manners; not the moral qualities—the passions and the sentiments, for *they* are in substance the same in every age and place, and differ only occasionally in their stimulants and objects; but the habits, the courtesies, the domestic relations, the tone between husband and wife, master and servant, stranger and friend—these are the peculiarities of particular times and countries; and when a system of manners, in this sense, is to be adapted to a story of

a former age and perhaps foreign nation, the utmost that can be done seems to be to avoid any glaring anachronisms or absurd improbabilities, whilst the ease, the life, the force, which can alone be given where the poet paints his own manners and the habits of his own contemporaries, may be pronounced to be absolutely beyond the power of the liveliest ingenuity. I know no heroic poems except the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Poem of the Cid*, in which the manners are the genuine manners of the poet's own years of the world; in all others they are mere conventional fictions, fitting all stories equally, like state robes, because exactly fitting none, and under the cumbrous folds of which all grace and nature, and spirit of human action, are stifled altogether, or allowed to breathe out but at intervals. This facility and freedom from constraint, the effect of actual contemporary existence, is more singularly conspicuous to us in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*; because in the former poem, we are presented with a complete picture of rural and domestic life in connection with the heroic events of the story, and this picture, for various reasons, has not been copied with that remorseless iteration, with which the battles and speeches and warlike habits of the *Iliad* have, with more or less success, been redrawn and recoloured in almost every epic composition for the last two thousand years. The adventure with *Nausicaa*, the various scenes in the house of *Eumæus*, the walk to the town, the banqueting, the watching by night, and many other passages of what may be called the private life of the Homeric age, have scarcely, in any instance, suited the plans of more recent poets, and consequently remain in all their original freshness to us even at this day. Indeed the *Odyssey*, as a poem, is absolutely unique; for, although *Virgil* certainly, and perhaps even *Tasso*, have borrowed particular passages from it more largely than from the *Iliad* (a fact not commonly observed), the



character and scope of their great poems are utterly dissimilar to those of the *Odyssey*, which consist in raising an interest about, and in detailing the changing fortunes of, a single man, not as a general warring with armies against a city, but as an exile compassing by his own courage, and skill, and patience, the return to, and repossession of, his own home. It is in the rare combination or intermingling of all

——— “Hair-breadth ’scapes,  
And moving accidents by flood or field.”

with the high moral purpose of Ulysses—in the contrast of the one determined and still triumphant will of the man, with the transient and vain bafflings of winds or waves, of gods or monsters—the whole action lightened by the gladsome face of nature, and yet rendered awful by the known approaching execution of a heavenly decree, and by the mysterious tokens and the dangerous odds, and the terrible vengeance attending on the last and crowning achievement of the hero, that the secret of the character of the *Odyssey*, and the spring of its universal charm, lie concealed—a secret which deserves the study of the philosopher—a charm which the hearts of all men feel, and over which time and place have no dominion.

The prominent characters of the *Odyssey* are less numerous than those of the *Iliad*. With the exception of the exquisite sketches of Helen and Nausicaa—Ulysses, Penelope, Telemachus, and Eumæus are the only figures that stand in relief during the greater part of the poem. Of these Ulysses is, beyond all comparison, the most important and the most interesting. He is rather equal to, than like, the Ulysses of the *Iliad*, and seems in all respects to be more in his own genuine element in the midst of adventures and tempests, and in disguise, than when openly counselling and fighting on the Plain of Troy. Not that he

Characters.

Ulysses.

for a moment becomes the mean, cunning, pusillanimous creature which Sophocles\* represents him—very far from it; but still he is a hero contending with want, and weakness, and the embarrassments of ordinary life: and the circumstances in which he is successively placed call forth a liveliness, a variety, and a versatility of genius in him, which are strongly contrasted with the more uniform aspect of his character in the *Iliad*. In his speeches, his conduct, and the sway he acquires and maintains over all around him, we perceive the man of genius as well as the hero; he surpasses all the Phæacians in his eloquence more than he beats them at quoits, and it is easy to conceive the feelings of pride and delight with which Arete bursts forth at the conclusion of the first part of the narrative of his adventures:—

Φαίηκες, πῶς ὕμῃν ἀνὴρ ὅγε φαίνεται εἶναι,  
εἶδός τε, μέγεθός τε, ἰδὲ φρένας ἔνδον ἐΐσας;  
ξείνος δ' αὖτ' ἐμός ἐστιν.†

Phæacians! how appears he in your eyes,  
This stranger, graceful as he is in port,  
In stature noble, and in mind discreet?  
My guest he is!

COWPER.

It is particularly worthy of notice, that in no instance have the authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* shown any disposition to draw what is called a perfect character; we meet with no paragons either of virtue or vice—those fictions of a cloistered imagination; but man is represented as man always and indeed is, full of inequalities and apparent inconsistencies, the effects of the flooding and ebbing, the winds and the currents, of the passions; he is made to act on the most popular motives; he avails himself of the most obvious means; he sorrows or rejoices as the most natural emotions prompt him. “The natural Greek in Homer’s days,”

\* Philoctetes.

† *Α'*. XI. 335–337.

says Blackwell in the best passage in his book,\* “ covered none of his sentiments. He frankly owned the pleasures of love and wine ; he told how voraciously he ate when he was hungry, and how horribly he was frightened when he saw an approaching danger ; he looked upon no means as base to escape it, and was not at all ashamed to relate the trick or fetch that had brought him off ; while the haughty Roman, who scorned to owe his life to anything but his virtue and fortitude, despised accidental escapes and fortuitous relief in perils, and snuffed at the suppleness and levity of mind necessary to put them in practice.” Horace justly remarks† that Homer

“ *Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssem* ”——

an imitable example of what courage, talent, and perseverance are capable of effecting ; and in thought, manner, word, and deed, the exact opposite of the knight-errant. He courts danger, indeed, once or twice rather more than prudence would allow ; but it must be acknowledged that the provocation‡ was very tempting to a man of fighting habits ; in general, however, Ulysses acts like an old soldier, aware of his own value, and never disregarding the odds of number or place. Yet he never seems, under any circumstances, however unfavourable, to be less than a hero of the right Homeric stamp ; and I doubt if we are ever more sensible of a certain majesty inherent in him, than when we see him in rags, a beggar and a laughing-stock in his own house. We fancy we see the keen eye of the Avenger gleaming forth from amidst the gray hairs and the worn features under which the genuine countenance lay shrouded, whilst he counts the heads of his destined victims, and waits in patience till his hour arrives. When Antinous strikes him on the back, he stands un-

\* Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer, p. 340.

† Ep. I. 2.

‡ M'. XII. 338.

shaken, like a rock, *ῥύτε πέτρῃ*,\* and speaks with such gravity and reason, that he evidently draws the majority of the Suitors to his side; but the repeated insolence of the contemptible Melanthius falls like a leaf on the deep stream of his thought, and sinks not:—

——— τὸν δ' οὔτι προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς,  
ἀλλ' ἀκέων κίνησε κάρη, κακὰ βυσσοδομέων.†

——— Him the hero answered not,  
But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds  
Of vengeance ruminated. COWPER.

And when the no less contemptible Ctesippus hurls an ox's joint at him, he just sufficiently declines his head, and grimly smiles *in his heart* at the thought of the coming revenge:—

——— μείδῃσε δὲ Δυμῶ  
Σαρδάνιον μάλα τοῖον.‡

——— With a broad sardonic smile,  
Of dread significance. COWPER.

With all this, there is a prevailing cheerfulness of manner, and ever and anon an expression of earnest remonstrance and moral speculation, which, in a moment, reveals the philosophical observer of the course of human life. His warning speech to Amphinomus, whom he wishes to exempt from his meditated destruction of the other Suitors, is admirably conceived in a strain of mysterious intimation of the future event, and draws up still farther the veil which concealed the returned Ulysses from the eyes of the infatuated intruders on his home:—

οἷ' ὁρώ, μνηστῆρας ἀτάσθαλα μηχανόοντας,  
κτῆματα κείροντας, καὶ ἀτιμάζοντας ἄκοιτιν  
ἀνδρῶς, ὃν οὐκ ἔτι φημι φίλων καὶ πατρίδος αἵης  
δῆρ' ἐν ἀπέσσεσθαι· μάλα δὲ σχεδόν· ἀλλὰ σε δαίμων

\* P'. XVII. 462-465.

† γ'. XX. 183, 184.

‡ γ'. XX. 299-302.

οἴκαδ' ὑπεΐαγάγοι, μηδ' ἀντιάσειας ἐκείνῳ,  
 ὅππότε νοστήσειε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν·  
 οὐ γὰρ ἀναιμωτεῖ γε διακρινέεσθαι ὄω  
 μνηστῆρας, κακῆϊον, ἐπεὶ κε μέλαθρον ὑπέλθοι.\*

So do not these. These ever bent I see  
 On deeds injurious—the possessions large  
 Consuming, and dishonouring the wife  
 Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain  
 Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,  
 Even at the door. Thee, therefore, may the gods  
 Steal hence in time!—ah! meet not his return  
 To his own country!—they will not part  
 (He and the Suitors) without blood, I think,  
 If once he enters at these gates again. COWPER.

One marked difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* consists in this, that in the former poem there is no hero in the modern sense of the term; no one person to whom everything is referred, and whose actions and words, whose dangers and success, constitute the substance and the object of the poem. I am well aware that this will be—has been—denied. Such references as μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλεΐωνα—and the like, will hardly be sufficient to establish the contrary; and it must, at least, be allowed, that the impression of Achilles is very faint upon nearly one half of the *Iliad*,—Diomed, Ajax, and Hector distracting, at all events, if not entirely usurping, the real interest felt by the reader. The poem is not an *Achilleid*, but an *Iliad*, as it was very rightly named by early antiquity. But the *Odyssey* or *Ulyssid* is a story exclusively concerning, and devoted to the honour of, the one man Ulysses; every event is connected, all men are compared, with him; weeping or stern, patient or furious, silent or speaking, swimming or fighting, naked or in rags, in robes or in armour—he is ever before our eyes in some shape or other—the central heart, from which life-blood flows

into every the minutest vein and vesicle of the entire poem. We read the *Iliad* in much the same spirit and manner in which we read one of the brilliant, lifesome, historical plays of Shakspeare; which may be taken up and laid down in any part without injury to our pleasure, and where a Henry, a Harry, a Hotspur, a Glendower, or a Douglas, are so many centres, to each of which our affections are attracted in turn. But the reader of the *Odyssey* is irresistibly drawn on by the never-intermitting magic of Ulysses' name; he craves for the constant presence of the wise and adventurous Greek, as he is accustomed to do for the appearance of Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, and Lear; one great and superior nature absorbs the attention, concentrates and points the imagination, and gives an intellectual desire, which a perpetual beholding of its own greatness can alone gratify. The character of Ulysses is, in itself, the perfect idea of an accomplished man of the world after the manner of the ancient Paganism; and, like all ideas, in the original and true sense of the word, it not only fills and satisfies, but also gives a vital, energetic, realizing power to the mind that completely apprehends it. Let a person, after having read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, reflect for a while on the totally different impressions made on his imagination by the two names of Achilles and Ulysses, and I believe he will fully conceive the meaning and the verity of the distinction which I have here ventured to introduce. Not one of the characters in the *Iliad*, with, perhaps, the exception of Hector, satisfies the mind in and by itself; every one of them is regarded collaterally with, or in contrast to, another of them, and the pleasure we receive, is the mixed result of the action of all; but Ulysses, in the *Odyssey*, shines by his own light, moves by his own strength, and demolishes all obstacles by his own arm and his own wit; he receives no lustre from mere contrast; we admire his force, not his success; his battle,



not his victory; his heroism, and not his triumph alone; we refer others to him, but we refer Ulysses to himself. He is his own parallel. Ever excepting the great intellectual creations of Shakspeare, I think the Ulysses of the Odyssey the most perfect, the most entire, conception of character to be found anywhere in mere human literature.

A thoroughly great man of the world is an object to dazzle the imagination, rather than to touch the heart; some passion is requisite for the purpose of engaging our affections as well as our intellect. Accordingly, Ulysses has a passion, a vehement desire; he is very tender upon one point, and that one precisely upon which it is a virtue and a glory for a great man to be susceptible even to his own hinderance. Ulysses is homesick; he longs for Ithaca and his own fireside. This brings him at once in contact with the common feelings of every man in the world. For this he willingly encounters hunger, and thirst, and toil, and the hazard of death; and for this he foregoes animated youth and the love of a goddess, and foregoes them with joy. How beautifully is all this expressed in the following passages:—

τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὔρε καθήμενον οὐδέ ποτ' ὕσσε  
δακρυόφιν τέρσοντο· κατείθετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν  
νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦν δανε νύμφη.  
ἀλλ' ἦτοι νύκτας μὲν ἰαύεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη  
ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ·  
ἥματα δ' ἐν πέτρῃσι καὶ ἡϊόνεσσι καθίζων,  
δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων,  
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο, δάκρυα λείπων.  
ἀγχού δ' ἰσταμένη προσεφώνεε δῖα θεῶων

κάμμορε, μή μοι ἔτ' ἐνθάδ' ὀδύρεο, μηδὲ τοι αἰὼν  
φθινέτω· ἦδη γάρ σε μάλα πρόφρασσ' ἀποπέμψωι.\*

\* \* \* \* \*

οὕτω δὴ οἰκόνδε φίλῃν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν  
 αὐτίκα νῦν ἐθέλεις ἵεναι; σύ δὲ χαῖρε καὶ ἔμπησ'  
 εἵγε μὲν εἰδείης σῆσι φρεσιν, ὅσσα τοι αἶσα  
 κῆδε' ἀναπλῆσαι, πρὶν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι,  
 ἐνθάδε αὖθι μένων σὺν ἐμοὶ τόδε δῶμα φυλάσσοις  
 ἀθάνατός τ' εἴης· ἱμειρόμενός περ ἰδέσθαι  
 σὴν ἄλοχον, τῆς αἰὲν ἐέλδεται ἥματα πάντα.  
 οὐ μὲν Διὶν κείνης γὰρ χερσίων εὐχομαι εἶναι,  
 οὐ δέμας, οὐδὲ φυήν· ἐπεὶ οὐπὼς οὐδὲ ἔοικεν  
 Διητάς ἀθανάτησι δέμας καὶ εἶδος ἐρίζειν.

τὴν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολέμητις Ὀδυσσεύς.  
 πόντια θεά, μή μοι τόδε χῶεο· οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς  
 πάντα μάλ', οὐνεκα σεῖο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια  
 εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρη, μέγεθός τ', εἰς ἅντα ἰδέσθαι·  
 (ἡ μὲν γὰρ βροτός ἐστι, σὺ δ' ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως·)  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἥματα πάντα  
 οἴκαδ' εἰς ἐλθέμεναι, καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι.  
 εἰ δ' αὖ τις ῥαίῃσι θεῶν ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ,  
 στήσομαι, ἐν στήθεσσι νύκτων ταλαπενθέα θυμὸν·  
 ἥδη γὰρ μάλα πόλλ' ἔπαθον καὶ πόλλ' ἐμόγησα  
 κύμασι καὶ πολέμφ' μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω.\*

— On the shore

She found him seated; tears succeeding tears  
 Deluged his eyes, while, hopeless of return,  
 Life's precious hours to gnawing cares he gave  
 Continual, with the nymph now charmed no more.  
 Yet, cold as she was am'rous, still he pass'd  
 His nights beside her in the hollow grot,  
 Constrain'd, and day by day the rocks among,  
 Which lin'd the shore, heart-broken sat, and oft,  
 While wistfully he eyed the barren deep,  
 Wept, groan'd, desponded, sigh'd and wept again.  
 Then, drawing near, thus spake the nymph divine:  
 "Unhappy! weep not here, nor life consume  
 In anguish; go, thou hast my glad consent."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Oh, canst thou thus resolve  
 To seek, incontinent, thy native shores?  
 I pardon thee. Farewell! but could'st thou guess

The woes which Fate ordains thee to endure  
 Ere yet thou reach thy country, well-content  
 Here to inhabit, thou would'st keep my grot  
 And be immortal, howsoe'er thy wife  
 Engage thy every wish day after day.  
 Yet can I not in stature or in form  
 Myself suspect inferior aught to her,  
 Since competition cannot be between  
 Mere mortal beauties and a form divine."

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied:—  
 "Awful divinity! be not incensed!—  
 I know that my Penelope in form  
 And stature altogether yields to thee,  
 For she is mortal, and immortal thou,  
 From age exempt; yet not the less I wish  
 My home, and languish daily to return.  
 But should some god amid the sable deep  
 Dash me again into a wreck, my soul  
 Shall bear that also."

COWPER.

Penelope does not interest us in an equal degree with her husband. She is chaste and prudent; but as Ulysses scruples not to accept the favours of Calypso\* and Circe,† so she evidently goes considerable lengths in the way of coquetry with her suitors. Antinous declares in public that she had made promises to every one of them, and had sent messages to them:‡ she undoubtedly wishes earnestly for her husband's return, and seems sincere in her dislike of the prospect of a second marriage; nevertheless, she is not insensible to the charm of being admired and courted, and does not appear very seriously angry at the boldness of Antinous and the others, to which, it should seem, she might have put a stop by removing to her father's house, as Telemachus repeatedly hints she ought to do, and then choosing or refusing a husband as she pleased. She permits the constant spoil and dilapidation of her husband's or son's substance, and even the life of the latter to be perpetually exposed to danger from the violence and the hostility of men whom, ac-

Penelope.

\* E'. V. 226, 227.

† K'. X. 347.

‡ B'. II. 91, 92.

according to their own frequent professions, she had the means of leading in another direction. Yet it is possible that the general coldness, and even dryness, of the character of Penelope makes us feel with a livelier sympathy the beautifully imagined scene of her recognition of Ulysses—the surprise, the joy, the intervening doubt, the slow conviction, and the final burst of tenderness and love. It is in this most exquisite passage that we again perceive an equal mastery with that which drew the domestic fondness of Andromache and the matronly elegance of Helen, and have left all three as convincing proofs that matchless delicacy, and gentleness, and truth, were placed by poets in the bosom of woman in an age in which the boasted refinements and graces of modern society were utterly unknown.

τῆς δ' αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ  
 σῆματ' ἀναγνούσῃ, τὰ οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς.  
 δακρύσασα δ' ἔπειτ' ἰθὺς δράμεν, ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας  
 δειρῇ βάλλ' Ὀδυσῆϊ, κάρη δ' ἔκυσ', ἡδὲ προσηύδα.

μή μοι, Ὀδυσσεῦ, σκύζευ, ἐπεὶ τὰ περ ἄλλα μάλιστα  
 ἀνθρώπων πέπνυσο· θεοὶ δ' ὤπαζον οἷζύν,  
 οἳ νῶϊν ἀγάσαντο παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντε  
 ἥτις ταρπῆναι, καὶ γήραος οὐδὸν ἰκέσθαι.  
 αὐτὰρ μὴ νῦν μοι τόδε χῶεο, μηδὲ νεμέσσα,  
 οὐνεκα σ' οὐ τὸ πρῶτον, ἐπεὶ ἴδον, ὧδ' ἀγάπησα·  
 αἶει γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν  
 ἐβρόγχει, μή τίς με βροτῶν ἀπάφοιτ' ἐπέεσσιν  
 ἐλθών.\*

He ceased; she, conscious of the sign so plain  
 Giv'n by Ulysses, heard with fluttering heart  
 And falt'ring knees that proof. Weeping, she ran  
 Direct towards him, threw her arms around  
 The Hero, kiss'd his forehead, and replied:—  
 “ Ah, my Ulysses! pardon me! frown not—  
 Thou who at other times hast ever shown  
 Superior wisdom! All our griefs have flow'd  
 From the gods' will! They envied us the bliss

Of undivided union, sweet enjoy'd  
 Through life, from early youth to latest age.  
 No. Be not angry now;—pardon the fault  
 That I embraced thee not as soon as seen;—  
 For horror hath not ceased to overwhelm  
 My soul, lest some false alien might, perchance,  
 Beguile me."

COWPER.

Telemachus is very skilfully drawn, so as to be always subordinate to his father, and yet <sup>Telemachus.</sup> sufficiently full of promise and opening prowess to justify his heroic blood, and to give him a becoming eminence amongst the other characters of the poem; and when this is carried so far as to represent him, a mere youth, on the point of bending the bow,\* which the Suitors were unable to achieve, the real improbability is lost in a sense of poetical propriety, whilst, at the same time, his instantaneous submission to his father's nod replaces him in that relation of filial inferiority and obedience in which he is always meant permanently to be viewed. Yet Telemachus is not a pleasing character on the whole; his demeanour towards his mother, notwithstanding some occasional expressions of kindness, is generally unaffectionate, and there is sometimes what might be called an interested disposition manifested by him, which prevents us from fully sympathizing in his long-cherished wishes for his father's return. This, however, must be said, that the strength of his character opens as the action of the poem advances, and in the latter books, after he is intrusted with the secret of the hero's return, he seems to have a dignity and an energy imparted to him beyond his natural powers. There is one very charming passage, in some sense connected with the delineation of his character, which leads me just to take notice of the easy and genuine manners of old Euryclea the nurse; it is where she *puts* <sup>Euryclea.</sup> Telemachus to *bed* (if I may use such a nursery phrase), and folds and hangs up his clothes in a way

\* Φ'. XXI. 128.

that might satisfy the most careful mother of the present day.

ἢ οἱ ἅμ' αἰδομένας θαΐδας φέρε, καὶ ἐ μάλιστα  
 ὁμῳάων φιλέεσκε, καὶ ἔτρεφε τυτθὸν ἐόντα.  
 ὦϊζεν δὲ Δύρας θαλάμου πύκα ποιητοῖο·  
 ἔζετο δ' ἐν λέκτρῳ, μαλακὸν δ' ἔκθουε χιτῶνα·  
 καὶ τὸν μὲν γραίης πυκιμηδῆος ἔμειλε χερσίν.  
 ἡ μὲν τὸν πτύξασα καὶ ἀσκήσασα χιτῶνα,  
 πασσάλῳ ἀγκρεμάσασα παρὰ τρητοῖσι λέχεσσι,  
 βῆ δ' ἔμμεν ἐκ θαλάμοιο· Δύρην δ' ἐπέρυσε καρύνῃ,  
 ἀργυρέῃ· ἐπὶ δὲ κληῖδ' ἐτάνυσσεν ἱμάντι.\*

She bore the torches, and with truer heart  
 Loved him than any of the female train,  
 For she had nursed him in his infant years.  
 He open'd his broad chamber-valves, and sat  
 On his couch-side; then, putting off his vest  
 Of softest texture, placed it in the hands  
 Of the attendant dame discreet, who, first  
 Folding it with exactest care, beside  
 His bed suspended it, and going forth  
 Drew by its silver ring the portal close,  
 And fasten'd it with bolt and brace secure.

COWPER.

*Eumæus.* Eumæus is a character less within the reach of modern imitation than any other in the *Odyssey*. He is a genuine country gentleman of the age of Homer, living at a distance from the town, having servants or labourers under him, but being at the same-time the principal herdsman and superintendent of the swine belonging to Ulysses, which of course constituted an important article of the hero's property. He had come a stranger to Ithaca, and Ulysses had been his patron and friend; these circumstances are evidently ingredients in the jealous dislike with which Melanthius and the Suitors regard him. He is professedly of the old party, and is independent enough to be able to act boldly on his principles. I think Professor Koliades has



great reason to be proud of his descent from this most respectable man. The scenes in his house are unequalled in their way, and are as remarkably different from the poetical rusticities of Theocritus and Virgil as they are from the coarseness of real life passed in low country occupations. There is a dignity and a philosophical elevation given to Eumæus, which, without injuring the natural colouring of his manners, throw the light of poetry around them; and, after a very slight acquaintance with him, we repeat the  $\delta\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma\ \dot{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\rho\tilde{\epsilon}\delta\varsigma$  (divine or noble swineherd) and the  $\dot{\upsilon}\rho\chi\alpha\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \dot{\alpha}\nu\delta\epsilon\rho\tilde{\omega}\nu$  (leader of men), not only without any sense of ridiculous incongruity, but with a hearty feeling of their moral propriety. The character of Eumæus is a very complete conception, and a remarkably interesting specimen of rural life and its habits, in the very remote age in which it was produced.

The story of the adventures of Ulysses and his companions with Circe\* is not only picturesque and dramatic in the highest degree in itself, but also contains one of the most striking and complete allegories existing in the writings of any poet, ancient or modern. That we should give a moral application to this narrative seems reasonable, though perhaps Lord Bacon is right in thinking that there was little of such inwardness in the poet's own meaning.† In the course of their wanderings, the hero and his companions arrive at a beautiful island, in the centre of which some of the party, who go out to explore, discover a mansion and the fair-haired Circe, or Pleasure, singing and weaving within. They are invited and enter in; a table richly spread is placed before them, and they all drink deep of the cup which Circe mixes and drugs for them. Then, in the height of their revelling, she strikes them with a wand, and immediately they are changed into

Allegory  
—Circe.

\* *Kirkar* (Phœnician), to destroy or corrupt.—BOCHART, *Chan.* I.

† *Adv. of Learning.*

swine to all outward appearance—the human sense and identity remaining, however, within—and are driven out to grovel in the mire. One only, Eurylochus, escapes from this embruting of the soul, by immediate flight before he has entered the palace, and he informs Ulysses of what has taken place. The hero sets out with a determination to rescue his degraded friends and to subdue the enchantress; but, whilst on the way, he is met by Mercury, the heavenly messenger, who warns him that his natural strength is insufficient to resist the allurements and magic power of the goddess, and that without assistance he will share the same fate with his companions. Upon which Mercury picks from the ground the sacred herb Moly (Μῶλυ) or Temperance, and places it in the hands of Ulysses; this herb is black in the root, but bears a flower as white as milk, and it lies so deeply buried in the earth that the gods alone can procure it for man. Inly strengthened by the virtuous root, and instructed how to act against the incantations of the deceitful Power, the hero proceeds with a thoughtful mind to the beautiful and elaborate palace of Circe. He stands on the threshold and calls, and on the instant the enchantress opens her shining portals and invites him in. She leads him to a throne, sets viands before him, drugs the cup as before, and when she sees that Ulysses has drunk its contents, she strikes him with her wand, and bids him go and herd with his companions in the sty. But the intoxicating potion has not touched his sober soul, and at the word he springs upon the astonished Circe with his drawn sword, as if to slay her; she evades the blow, falls at his feet, and, after inquiring who and what he is, concludes he can be no other than the wise Ulysses. She then solicits him to accept her favours, and to indulge in all the luxuries of her mansion; but Ulysses, now master of her and of himself, refuses to listen to her till she has bound her divinity by an oath to do him no harm for the future, and also to restore his com-

panions to their natural shapes. She swears, and restores them, and they appear younger and fresher than before; and they and Ulysses remain in peace and safety for a year, in the now harmless society of the awful goddess. The moral meaning of this beautiful tale needs not to be pointed out in particular; every part illustrates the use and the abuse of worldly pleasure.\* Milton, the idea of whose Comus differs from that of the fable of Circe in exhibiting the spiritual and intellectual, rather than the mere moral or prudential, nature in danger from, and finally triumphing over, the charms of worldly pleasure, seizes the thought of the Moly, and gives it a religious or Christian turn, which, of course, is not found in the Odyssey:—

Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,  
 But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;  
 The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,  
*But in another country*, as he said,  
*Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil*;  
 Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain  
 Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;  
 And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly  
 That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave, &c.

Gravina, whose beautiful work on poetry and poets deserves universal attention, represents the moral of this tale in the following words:—"Nella persona di Circe fe palese la natura del piacere, al quale chi corre senza la scorta della sagacità e della ragione, cangia costumi e mente, e si rende simile a' bruti; onde i compagni d' Ulissee, che mal si seppero reggere in quella felicità, divennero bestie; all' incontro chi è guidato dalla ragione, trae dal piacere il puro e ne scuote il velenoso al pari di Ulissee, il quale coll' erba *Moly* datagli da Mercurio, cioè con la sagacità, si godè Circe; ma com' ella volle adoperare in lui la fraude, egli s' armò della ragione, con la quale potè soggiogarla."—§ 16.

\* Od. κ'. X. 414.

The story of the Sirens,\* also, is a beautiful embodying of the same moral truth, that no man can listen, without destruction, to the enchanting voice of worldly pleasure, unless he in some measure binds himself hand and foot by the strong fetters of duty and self-control; even then the best safety consists in physical inability to comply, and a rapid removal from the scene of temptation. One delightfully natural passage in this part of the poem may with propriety be quoted; it is where Ulysses appears again to those whom he had left in his ship, after they had supposed him dead or lost:—

ὥς ἐμὲ κείνοι, ἐπεὶ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι,  
δακρυόεντες ἔχυντο· δόκησε δ' ἄρα σφίσι θυμὸς  
ὥς ἔμεν, ὥς εἰ πατρίδ' ἰκοίατο καὶ πόλιν αὐτῶν  
τρηχέης Ἰθάκης, ἵνα τ' ἐτράφεν, ἧδ' ἐγένοντο.  
καὶ μὲν ὀλοφυρόμενοι ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων·  
σοὶ μὲν νοστήσαντι, διοτρεφεῖς, ὥς ἐχάρημεν,  
ὥς εἴτ' εἰς Ἰθάκην ἀφικοίμεθα πατρίδα γαίαν.†

So they, at sight of me, dissolved in tears  
Of rapt'rous joy, and each his spirit felt  
With like affections warm'd, as he had reach'd  
Just then his country, and his city seen,  
*Fair* Ithaca, where he was born and rear'd;  
Then in wing'd accents tender thus they spoke:—

Noble Ulysses! thy appearance fills  
Our souls with transports, such as we should feel  
Arrived in safety on our native shore. COWPER.

Similes.

In frequency, length, and picturesqueness of Similes, the *Odyssey* is certainly, upon the whole, very far behind the *Iliad*; instead of two hundred and more of them, there are less than fifty, and these, with a few exceptions, are short, and imitated from those of the elder poem. The most spirited of those exceptions

\* *Sir* (Phæn.), to sing; *Siren*, tuneful.—BOCHART, *Chan.* I.

*Scylla* is from *Scol*, destruction; Charybdis from *Chorobdan*, the chasm of ruin or destruction.—BOCHART, *ib.*

† Od. κ'. X. 414.

are, perhaps, the two following, which represent respectively Penelope in her widowed state, and Ulysses standing in the midst of the slaughtered Suitors. The beauty of both is equal to anything in the *Iliad* :—

ὥς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέου κόρυς, χλωρῆϊς ἀηδῶν,  
καλὸν αἰίδῃσιν, ἔαρος νέον ἵσταμένοιο,  
δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πυκνοῖσιν,  
ἥτε δαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν,  
παῖδ' ὀλοφυρομένη Ἴτυλον φίλον, ὃν ποτε χαλκῷ  
κτεῖνε δι' ἀφραδίας, κοῦρον Ζήθου ἀνακτος.\*

As when at Spring's first entrance, her sweet song  
The azure-crested nightingale renews,  
Daughter of Pandareus; within the grove's  
Thick foliage perch'd, she pours her echoing voice,  
Now deep, now clear, with ever varying strains  
Deploring Itylus, whom she destroy'd  
(Her son by royal Zethus) unaware.

COWPER.

I cannot leave this passage without remarking the accuracy of observation apparent in it, as to the retired habits and vast compass of song of the nightingale. She is shrouded in the thick foliage, and with reiterated turns pours forth a many noted or toned voice. A great poet and observer of nature, in our times, has gone into a more subtle character of—

the merry nightingale  
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates  
With fast thick warble his delicious notes.  
Far and near,  
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,  
They answer and provoke each other's song,  
With skirmish and capricious passagings,  
And murmurs musical and swift jug, jug.  
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—  
Stirring the air with such a harmony,  
That should you close your eyes, you might almost  
Forget it was not day ! On moon-lit bushes,  
Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,  
You may perchance behold them on the twigs.

\* Od. T'. XIX. 518-523.

Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,  
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade  
Lights up her love-torch.\*

Compare with the third and fourth line of the Homeric passage quoted above, the Virgilian imitation, *Qualis populeæ*, &c., and remark the vagueness of the description, which in no respect distinguishes the nightingale's song from that of any other bird.

The other simile is of another kind, and more in the spirit of the *Iliad* :—

εἶρεν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ πταμένοις νεκύεσσιν  
αἵματι καὶ λυθρῷ πεπαλαγμένον ὥστε λέοντα,  
ὃς ἔα τε βεβρωκὼς βοὸς ἔρχεται ἀγραύλοιο,  
πᾶν δ' ἄρα οἱ στήθός τε, παρήϊά τ' ἀμφοτέρωθεν  
αἵματόεντα πέλει· δεινὸς δ' εἰς ὧπα ἰδέσθαι  
ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς πεπάλακτο πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὑπερθεύ.†

——— She found

Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain,  
With blood defiled and dust: dread he appear'd  
As from the pastured ox newly devour'd  
The lion stalking back; his ample chest  
With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung:—  
Tremendous spectacle!—such seem'd the Chief  
Blood-stain'd all over.

COWPER.

This is undoubtedly a very fine image; and there is another, not indeed in the form of simile, but in which the graphic power is so remarkable, that I cannot refrain from adding it to the foregoing specimens. It describes the rousing of a wild boar by Ulysses in a recess of Parnassus :—

\* Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, vol. i. p. 213.

† *Od.* x'. XXII. 401-406. The likening of ships to sea-horses—*ἄλλες ἵπποι*—is an expression worth notice. *Od.* Δ'. IV. 708. "Horses of the sea," however, is a common synonyme for ships in the Icelandic poetry; and those of my readers who have been at sea in a gale of wind will recollect the long, curved, *coursing*, waves, streaming down with foam, which the sailors call, very appropriately, "horses' manes." You never see this particular sort of wave but at the beginning or early part of a gale. They are lost in a storm.



ἔνθα δ' ἄρ' ἐν λόγχμῃ πυκινῇ κατέκειτο μέγας σῦς·  
 τὴν μὲν ἄρ' οὐτ' ἀνέμων διάει μένος ὑγρὸν ἀέντων,  
 οὔτε μὲν ἥελιος φαέθων ἀκτῖσιν ἔβαλλεν,  
 οὐτ' ὄμβρος περάασκε διαμπερές· ὥς ἄρα πυκνὴ  
 ἦεν· ἀτὰρ φύλλων ἐνέην χύσις ἥλιθα πολλή.  
 τὸν δ' ἀνδρῶν τε κυνῶν τε περὶ κτύπος ἤλθε ποδοῖν,  
 ὡς ἐπάγοντες ἐπῆσαν· ὁδ' ἀντίος ἐκ ξυλόχοιο  
 φρίξας εὖ λοφίην, πῦρ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι δεδορκῶς  
 στῆ ῥ' αὐτῶν σχεδύθεν· ὁ δ' ἄρα πρῶτιστος Ὀδυσσεὺς  
 ἔσσυτο.\*

There hid in thickest shades a huge boar lay.  
 That covert neither rough winds blowing moist  
 Could penetrate, nor could the noonday sun  
 Smite through it, or fast-falling showers pervade;  
 So thick it was: and underneath, the ground  
 With litter of dry foliage strew'd profuse.  
 Hunters and dogs approaching him, his ear  
 The sound of feet perceived; upridging high  
 His bristly spine, and glaring fire, he sprang  
 Forth from the shrubs, and in defiance stood  
 Near and right opposite. Ulysses first  
 Assail'd him.

COWPER.

Passages so distinctly grouped and pictured as these are not numerous in the *Odyssey*, and an inferiority in this respect to the *Iliad* must be acknowledged, nor can we completely account for it on the score of the difference of subject-matter and style. There is, however, a compensation for this in the vigour and liveliness of more diffused descriptions. One very eminent instance will be quoted hereafter. In the meantime I cannot quit a singularly striking effort of imagination, in a passage which seems only explicable upon the Scotch doctrine of second sight. The Suitors are revelling in great insolence on the eve of their destruction:—

—— μνηστῆρσι δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη  
 ἄσχεστον γέλον ᾤρσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νήμα.  
 οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελῶν ἀλλοσπρίοισιν·

αἰμοφύρρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἥσθιον· ὕσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων  
δακρυόφιν πῖμπλαντο· γόνον δ' ὠτέτο θυμός·  
τοῖσι δὲ δὴ μετέειπε Θεοκλύμενος θεοειδής·

ἂ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμέων  
εἰλύαται κεφαλαί τε, πρόσωπά τε, νέρθε τέ γούνα.  
οἴμωγῇ δὲ δέδῃε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί·  
αἷματι δ' ἐξῥάδαται τοῖχοι, καλαί τε μεσώδμαι.  
εἰδώλων δὲ πλεόν πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,  
ιεμένων· Ἐρεβόςδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἥελιος δὲ  
οὐρανοῦ ἐξάπλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀχλύς.  
ὦς ἔφαθ'· οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἡδὺ γέλασσαν.\*

—————Then Pallas struck  
The Suitors with delirium; wide they stretch'd  
Their jaws with unspontaneous laughter loud;  
Their meat dropp'd blood; tears fill'd their eyes, and dire  
Presages of approaching woe their hearts;  
Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus.

“ Ah! miserable men!—what curse is this  
That takes you now? Night wraps itself around  
Your faces, bodies, limbs; the palace shakes  
With peals of groans; and oh! what floods ye weep!  
I see the walls and arches dappled thick  
With gore; the vestibule is throng'd; the court  
On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim  
Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom  
Of Erebus: the sun is blotted out  
From heaven, and midnight whelms you premature.”  
He said: they, hearing, laugh'd.

COWPER.

It has been observed already that a change in  
Language. the forms of several words is perceptible in the  
Odyssey. That change is invariably shown in an ab-  
breviation of syllables or time, as is always the case in  
the process of refining a language for the purposes of  
civilized society. The alterations in the Odyssey are  
not very numerous, but they are sufficiently so to indi-  
cate a date for the composition of that poem subsequent  
to that of the Iliad. Ἀγρότης for ἀγροιώτης, νώνυμος for  
νώνυμος, Δέσπις for Δεσπέσιος, are instances, amongst many

\* Od. γ'. XX. 345–358.

others, of the tendency to contraction to which I have adverted. In the *Odyssey* possessions are more commonly called χρήματα from *using*, whilst in the elder poem they are more commonly termed κτήματα from *gaining*. Λέσχη and βύβλινον ὄπλον are only found in the *Odyssey*, and Μεσσήνη also, of which no notice is taken in the catalogue of the *Iliad*. The strings of the lyre are made of λίνον or flax in the more ancient \*—of sheep's gut, ἐϋστρεφέες ἐντερων οἶδς, in the more modern poem. † An accurate comparison of any two or three books of both works will enable the student to add largely to the few instances given here of changes in the forms of old, and use of new, words in the *Odyssey*; and it is well worthy of notice, as I have before remarked, with reference to the age of this poem, that in every instance the usage of the *Odyssey* became the usage of succeeding times. However, in placing the indicative mood after ἐπὶν and other adverbs, in cases where, according to regular grammar, the subjunctive is always used, both poems agree. This is a point to which attention should be directed.

Of the Versification of the *Odyssey* I need say little here; it is essentially the same as that of the *Iliad*, though perhaps less dactylic, and consequently less rapid and continuous in its course. In variety, sweetness, and harmony, it is almost equally delightful and equally inimitable.

In concluding this Introduction, I cannot refrain from expressing my hearty regret that this admirable poem is not more generally read in schools and universities. That it is in fact very little read, is well known to all those who have gone through the usual course of a public education. Undoubtedly the *Odyssey* is not so high an effort of the imagination as the *Iliad*, yet it is as pregnant with moral and prudential wisdom, as full of life and variety, and much more

\* Il. σ'. XVIII. 570.

† Od. φ'. XXI. 408.

romantic. The *Iliad* excites the most admiration, the *Odyssey* the most interest. All the latter half of this poem is unequalled as a mere story, and it contains situations and incidents than which no poet or painter ever represented, or even conceived, anything more grand and spirit-stirring. "When you are reciting the passage where Ulysses leaps upon the threshold," says Plato, "and discards his rags, and shows himself to the astonished Suitors, and pours out his arrows on the ground before his feet—are you then in your senses, or beside yourself?"\* What a picture this moment would make in the hands of a really great artist! So of the passage just preceding this, where Ulysses, a majestic beggar in his own house, takes up, and handles and strings the mighty bow as one would string a lyre, and twangs it to his ear, and it sings like a swallow, whilst the Suitors change colour, and Jupiter thunders dreadfully, and shows signs of something coming, and the patient hero rejoices.† The following lines are in a different strain, but equally graphic and vigorous. They describe the shipwreck of Ulysses after he has left the island of Calypso:—

ὡς εἰπὼν, σύναγεν νεφέλας, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον.  
 χερσὶ τρίαιναν ἑλών· πάσας δ' ὀρόθυνεν ἄελλας  
 παντοίων ἀνέμων· σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε  
 γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει δ' οὐρανὸθεν νύξ.  
 σὺν δ' Εὐρὸς τε Νότος τ' ἔπεσε, Ζέφυρός τε δυσαῆς,  
 καὶ Βορέης αἰὼρηγενέτης, μέγα κῆμα κυλίνδων.  
 καὶ τότε Ὀδυσσεὺς λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ  
 ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν.

ὦ μοι ἐγὼ δειλὸς, τί νύ μοι μήκιστα γένηται;  
 δεῖδω, μὴ δὴ πάντα θεὰ νημερτέα εἶπεν,  
 ἥ μ' ἔφατ' ἐν πόντῳ, πρὶν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι,  
 ἄλγε' ἀναπλήσειν· τὰδε δὴ νῦν πάντα τελεῖται.  
 οἷοισιν νεφέεσσι περιστέφει οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν

\* Ion.

† Φ'. XXI. 404–415.

Ζεὺς, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον, ἐπισπέρχουσι δ' ἄελλαι  
 παντοίων ἀνέμων· νῦν μοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὕλεθρος·  
 τρίς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότ' ὕλοντο  
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, χάριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι φέροντες.  
 ὥς δὴ ἔγωγ' ὕφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν  
 ἥματι τῷ, ὅτε μοὶ πλεῖστοι χαλκῆρεα δοῦρα  
 Τρῶες ἐπέβριψαν περὶ Πηλείωνι θανόντι.  
 τῷ κ' ἔλαχον κτερέων, καὶ μευ κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί·  
 νῦν δέ με λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ εἴμαρτο ἀλῶναι.

ὥς ἄρα μιν εἰπὺντ' ἔλασεν μέγα κῦμα κατ' ἄκρης,  
 ὀνεινὸν ἐπεσσύμενον, περὶ δὲ σχεδίῃν ἐλέλιξεν.  
 τῇλῃ δ' ἀπὸ σχεδίας αὐτὸς πέσε, πηδάλιον δὲ  
 ἐκ χειρῶν προέηκε· μέσον δὲ οἱ ἴστων ἔαξε  
 ὀνεινὴ μισγομένων ἀνέμων ἐλθοῦσα θύελλα.  
 τηλοῦ δὲ σπεῖρον καὶ ἐπὶ κριον ἔμπεσε πόντῳ,  
 τὴν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόβρυχα θῆκε πολὺν χρόνον. οὐδὲ οὐνάσθη  
 αἶψα μάλ' ἀνσχεθέειν μεγάλου ὑπὸ κύματος ὀρμῆς·  
 εἴματα γάρ ῥ' ἐβάρυνε, τὰ οἱ πόρε δῖα Καλυψώ·  
 ὅψε δὲ δὴ ῥ' ἀνέδου, στόματος δ' ἐξέπτυσεν ἄλμην  
 πικρὴν, ἣ οἱ πολλὰ ἀτὸ κρατὸς κελεύρυσεν.  
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς σχεδίῃς ἐπελήθετο, τειρόμενός περ,  
 ἀλλὰ μεθορμηθεὶς ἐν κύμασιν, ἐλλάβετ' αὐτῆς·  
 ἐν μέσση δὲ κάθιζε, τέλος θανάτου ἀλεινών.  
 τὴν δ' ἐφареῖ μέγα κῦμα κατὰ ὄν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.  
 ὥς δ' ὅτ' ὀπωρινὸς Βορέης φορέησιν ἀκάνθας  
 ἀμπεδίον, πυκιναὶ δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλησιν ἔχονται·  
 ὥς τὴν ἀμπέλαιος ἀνεμοὶ φέρον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.  
 ἄλλοτε μὲν τε Νότος Βορέῃ προβάλλεσκε φέρεσθαι,  
 ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτ' Εὐρὸς Ζεφύρῳ εἴζασκε διώκειν.\*

So saying, he grasp'd his trident, gather'd dense  
 The clouds and troubled Ocean; ev'ry storm  
 From ev'ry point he summon'd, Earth and Sea  
 Darkening, and the Night fell black from Heaven.  
 The East, the South, the heavy-blowing West,  
 And the cold North Wind clear, assail'd at once  
 His raft, and heaved on high the billowy flood.  
 All hope, all courage in that moment lost,

The Hero thus within himself complain'd:—  
 “Wretch that I am, what destiny at last  
 Attends me! much I fear the goddess' words  
 All true, which threaten'd me with num'rous ills  
 On the wide sea, ere I should reach my home.  
 Behold them all fulfill'd! with what a storm  
 Jove hangs the heav'ns, and agitates the deep!  
 The winds combined beat on me. Now I sink!  
 Thrice blest, and more than thrice, Achaia's sons  
 At Ilium slain for the Atridæ's sake!  
 Ah! would to Heaven that, dying, I had felt  
 That day the stroke of Fate, when me the dead  
 Achilles guarding, with a thousand spears  
 Troy's furious host assail'd! Funeral rites  
 I then had shar'd, and praise from ev'ry Greek,  
 Whom now the most inglorious death awaits.”

While thus he spake, a billow, on his head  
 Bursting impetuous, whirl'd the raft around,  
 And, dashing from his grasp the helm, himself  
 Plunged far remote. Then came a sudden gust  
 Of mingling winds that in the middle snapp'd  
 His mast, and, hurried o'er the waves afar,  
 Both sail and sail-yard fell into the flood.  
 Long time submerged he lay, nor could with ease  
 The violence of that dread shock surmount,  
 Or rise to air again, so burthensome  
 His drench'd apparel proved; but, at the last,  
 He rose, and rising, sputter'd from his lips  
 The brine that trickled copious from his brows.  
 Nor, harass'd as he was, resign'd he yet  
 His raft, but buffeting the waves aside  
 With desp'rate efforts, seized it, and again,  
 Fast seated on the middle deck, escaped.  
 Then roll'd the raft at random in the flood,  
 Wallowing unwieldy, toss'd from wave to wave,  
 As when, in Autumn, Boreas o'er the plain  
 Conglomerated thorns before him drives,  
 They tangled to each other close adhere,—  
 So her the winds drove wild about the deep.  
 By turns the South consign'd her to be sport  
 For the rude North Wind, and by turns the East  
 Yielded her to the worrying West a prey.

COWPER.

When we read these passages—indeed whilst we are reading almost any part of the poem, we are at a loss to discover evidence of that declining age and enfeebled



imagination, which, from certain assumptions of ancient critics, it has become a habit with us to impute to the author or authors of the *Odyssey*. I rather believe that languor or senility, or any thing approaching to it, would be amongst the last defects which a person without any such prejudice in his mind would think of laying to the charge of poets, whose fertility of invention, whose range of knowledge, and whose artifice of narrative, denote as much vigour as maturity of intellect; and whose poem in former times was, and in the present would be, if it were more commonly studied, the most thoroughly popular work of the kind in the world.

There are, indeed, some few passages in the *Odyssey* which are very displeasing, and can hardly be defended on a plea of poetical justice or dramatic fidelity. I mean particularly the treatment of Melanthius\* and the female servants,† than which nothing can be conceived more bloody, brutal, or disgusting. This always seems to me to be a complete blot in the otherwise grand and interesting picture of the righteous triumph of Ulysses. It is, in the true sense of the word, *indecorous*. As to all that follows the 296th line of the 23d book being rejected as spurious, it must be acknowledged, indeed, that many passages in it are weak, huddled, and unnatural; nevertheless, it may well be said, on the other hand, that the speech of Agamemnon in Hades, in which he narrates the death-fight of Achilles, and the funeral rites performed over his corpse, the description of the house and the garden of Laertes, and the scene of the mutual recognition of Ulysses and his aged father, are amongst the most beautiful and interesting parts of the whole poem.

Taken together, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are assuredly two of the grandest works of the human intellect. They may be looked upon as the embodied spirit

\* x'. XXII. 474-477.

† x'. XXII. 457-472.

of heroic poetry in the abstract, rather than as the poems of any particular poet. In them we can discover no peculiarities of thinking or feeling, no system, no caprice. All is wide, diffused, universal, like the primal light before it was gathered up, and parcelled off into greater and lesser luminaries to rule the day and night. Look at the difference, in this respect, between the Homeric and all the Greek poetry of the following ages! It is no longer the Muse speaking, but a Theban, or an Athenian, or a Sicilian poet. The individual appears; the temperament of the man is visible. Poems become unlike each other. The free and liberal spirit of the old heroic Muse is every day straitened, circumscribed, and, if I may use such an expression, packed up and labelled. This observation may be illustrated by reference to the poetry of modern nations. There are hundreds of old Spanish romances on the Cid and the heroes of Roncesvalles, undoubtedly the productions of various authors, which yet might be arranged in order, and set out as several heroic poems, with as little discrepancy between them in mere style and tone of feeling as can be perceived in the rhapsodies of the *Iliad*. The same may be said, with equal truth, of the ancient English ballads or romances on the Knights of the Round Table and the Morte Arthur. We know that these little poems are from different hands; yet I defy any critic to class them under different heads distinguishable by any difference of thought or feeling. As the nation grows older, and the rights of citizens and the habits of civil society become more precisely defined, the poet's compositions are more or less stamped with the mark of his own character; his spirit, in ceasing to be universal, waxes more intense and personal. A man who had not read a line of the works of Milton or Waller could not fail to perceive distinct authorship in any two pieces that could be selected from their poetry. So it is with the Greek Poets after the Homeric age.

Yet, no doubt, there are many hearts and minds to which one of these matchless poems will be more delightful than the other; there are many to which both will give equal pleasure, though of equal kinds; but there can hardly be a person, not utterly averse from the Muses, who will be quite insensible to the manifold charms of one or the other. The dramatic action of the *Iliad* may command attention where the more diffused narrative of the *Odyssey* would fail to do so; but how can any one, who loves poetry under any shape, help yielding up his soul to the virtuous Siren-singing of genius and truth, which is for ever resounding from the pages of each of these marvellous and truly immortal poems? In the *Iliad* will be found the sterner lessons of public justice or public expedience, and the examples are for statesmen and generals; in the *Odyssey* we are taught the maxims of private prudence and individual virtue, and the instances are applicable to all mankind; in both, honesty and fortitude are commended, and set up for imitation; in both treachery and cowardice are condemned, and exposed for our scorn and avoidance. Born, like the river of Egypt, in secret light, they yet roll on their great collateral streams, wherein a thousand poets have bathed their sacred heads, and thence drunk beauty and truth, and all sweet and noble harmonies. Known to no man is the time or place of their gushing forth from the earth's bosom, but their course has been amongst the fields and by the dwellings of men, and our children now sport on their banks and quaff their salutary waters. Of all the Greek poetry, I, for one, have no hesitation in saying that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the most delightful and have been the most instructive works to me; there is a freshness about them both which never fades, a truth and sweetness which charmed me as a boy and a youth, and on which, if I attain to it, I count largely for a soothing recreation in my old age.

## MARGITES.

THIS Poem, which was a Satire upon some strenuous blockhead, as the name implies, does not now exist; but it was so famous in former times that it seems proper to select it for a slight notice from amongst the score of lost works equally attributed to the hand of Homer. It is said by Harpocraton\* that Callimachus admired the Margites, and Dion Chrysostom says† that Zeno the philosopher wrote a commentary on it. A genuine verse, taken from this poem, is well known:—

πολλ' ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπίστατο πάντα.‡

For much he knew, but everything knew ill.

Two other lines, in the same strain, are preserved by Aristotle:—

τὸνδ' οὐτ' αἶσχαπτῆρα θεοὶ θέσαν, οὐτ' ἀροτῆρα,  
οὐτ' ἄλλως τι σοφὸν πάσης δ' ἡμάρτανε τέλινη.§

Him or to dig or plough the gods denied,  
A perfect blockhead in whate'er he tried.

It should seem from another place in Aristotle, that the Margites contained iambic verses; and, in fact, it appears from Harpocraton that iambic lines were scat-

\* In voce *Μαργίτης*.

† Diss. 53.

‡ Plato, Alcib. 2. The Atticism of the augment, however, is attributable to Plato, as is well remarked by Mr G. Penn. Prem. Arg.

§ Eth. vi. 7.

tered up and down throughout the poem without any rule but the caprice of the author.\* One other line, less peculiar, is found in the Scholiast to the Birds of Aristophanes :—

Μουσάων Δεράπων καὶ ἐκηϋόλου Ἀπόλλωνος.†

Far-shooting Phœbus' and the Muses' slave.

By others, however, the Margites was attributed to Pigres, and Mr. Knight is of opinion,‡ from the use of the augment in a few lines still preserved, that it was the work of an Athenian earlier than the time of Xerxes, but long after the lowest date of the composition of the Iliad. As it seems to me, it is certainly unphilosophical to suppose a pure satire to have been produced in the dawn of heroic poetry ; for, contrary to all other kinds of poems, the satire is essentially the offspring of civilized manners and a complicated and artificial state of society.

\* Arist. Poet. 7. Harp. *ubi supra*.

† Av. 914. Μουσάων Δεράπων  
ὁτρηρὸς, κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον.

‡ Proleg. in Hom.

## INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## BATRACHOMYOMACHIA.

Age and  
Author.

The Battle of the Frogs and Mice is a short mock-heroic poem of ancient date. The text varies in different editions, and is obviously disturbed and corrupt to a great degree. It is commonly said to have been a juvenile essay of Homer's genius; but others have attributed it to the same Pigres, whom I have mentioned before, and whose reputation for humour seems to have invited the appropriation of any wandering piece of ancient wit, the author of which was uncertain. So little did the Greeks, before the era of the Ptolemies, know or care about that department of criticism which is employed in determining the genuineness of ancient writings! As to this little poem being a youthful proluision of Homer's, it seems sufficient to say that from the beginning to the end it is a plain and palpable parody, not only of the general spirit, but of numerous passages, of the Iliad itself; and, even if no such intention to parody were discoverable in it, the objection would still remain, that to suppose a work of the mere burlesque to be the primary effort of poetry in a simple age, seems to reverse that order in the development of national taste, which the history of every other people in Europe, and of many in Asia, has almost ascertained to be a law of the human mind. It



is in a state of society much more refined and permanent than that described in the *Iliad*, that any popularity would attend such a ridicule of war and the gods as is contained in this poem; and the fact of there having existed three other poems\* of the same kind, attributed, for aught we can see, with as much reason to Homer, is a strong inducement to believe that none of them were in reality of the Homeric age. Mr. Knight† infers, from the usage of the word *ὀέλτοξ*‡ as a writing tablet instead of *διφθέρα* or a skin, which, according to Herodotus,§ was the material employed by the Asiatic Greeks for that purpose, that this poem was another offspring of Attic ingenuity; and, generally, that the familiar mention of the cock|| is a strong argument against so ancient a date for its composition.

As to the merits of the *Batrachomyomachia*,  
Character and Plan.  
 although we may have some difficulty in sympathizing fully in the ingenuous declaration of Jacobus Gaddius¶ that he thought it a more noble and perfect poem than either the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, yet we may well allow that it is a bold, easy, and witty mock-heroic composition, and not surpassed or even rivalled by many of those which have in subsequent ages followed in its train. The story is very short. A mouse, *Psycharpax* (Crumb-snatcher), exhausted with flying from a weasel, comes to a pool to drink; a wanton frog,

\* These were the *Arachnomachia*, *Geranomachia*, and *Psaromachia*; the Wars of the Spiders, the Cranes, and the Starlings.

† *Proleg. ad Hom.*

‡ V. 3.

§ *Terpsich.* 58.

|| V. 191. The cock is originally an Indian bird, and was introduced into Europe in the sixth century before Christ. Its figure is found on the coins of the Samothracians and of Himera of that date.—KNIGHT, *Proleg.*

¶ “*Paradoxon dicere volo, licet verear nasutos censores vel Momos; Batrachomyomachia mihi videtur nobilior propiorque perfectioni quam Odyssea et Ilias, imo utramque superat judicio ac ingenio et præstantia texturæ, cum sit poema ludicrum excellens.*”—T. 1. *de Script. non Ecclesiast.* p. 208. FABRIC. lib. ii. c. 2. s. 1.

Physignathus (Puffcheek), having apparently never seen such a wild-fowl before, enters into conversation with him, the result of which is that the Mouse mounts upon Frog's back, and goes to sea. It should seem that Frog meant to be honest, but, a water-snake lifting up his head at no great distance, he is so frightened that, forgetful of his poor landsman, down he dives to the bottom. Crumb-snatcher struggles, sputters, makes a speech denouncing his perfidious betrayer to the vengeance of every feeling Mouse, and then sinks amongst the bulrushes. The deceased was son and heir of the king of the Mice (a weasel and a gin had bereaved him of two brothers), and his father, by his influence, induces every Mouse in the field to take arms and avenge him of the injurious Frog. The Frogs perceive the bustle; and, arming themselves, are foolish enough to leave their more proper element, and meet their assailants on dry land. Meantime Jupiter holds a council on the subject, but at the suggestion of Minerva—who, though extremely angry with the Mice for nibbling one of her petticoats into rags, is still so incensed with the Frogs for depriving her of sleep, that she will assist neither party—it is resolved that the gods shall be passive spectators of the contest. The battle begins: great prowess is displayed on either side; but at length the Mice get the better, and the entire race of Frogs is on the very point of extermination, when Jupiter interferes with lightning and thunder. The Mice, however, pay no attention to these hints of the divine will, and are pursuing their advantage, when Jupiter, as a last resource, orders a detachment of Crabs to make an *échelon* movement upon the victors. This manœuvre effectually checks the Mice, who, some with their tails, and some with their legs bitten off, retire to their holes, and leave the remnant of the Frogs to croak dolefully over their defeat and loss.

THE description of the armour of the combatants will put the student in mind of Shaks-

peare's Queen Mab. The Mice arm as follows :—

κνημιῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμησιν ἔθηκαν,  
 ἔξξαντες κυάμους χλωροὺς, εὖτ' ἀσκήσαντες,  
 οὓς αὐτοὶ διὰ νυκτὸς ἐπιστάντες κατέτρωζαν.  
 Δώρηκας δ' εἶχον καλαμοστεφένων ἀπὸ βυρσῶν,  
 οὓς γαλήην οἰείραντες ἐπισταμένως ἐποίησαν.  
 ἄσπις δ' ἦν λύχλου τὸ μεσόμφαλον· ἡ δὲ νυ λόγχη  
 εὐμήκης βελόνη, παγχάλκεον ἔργον Ἀρηος.  
 ἡ δὲ κόρυς τὸ λέπυρον ἐπὶ κροτάφοις καρύοιο.\*

In verdant hulls, despoil'd of all their beans,  
 The buskin'd warriors stalk along the plains;  
 Quills aptly bound, their bracing corslet made,  
 Faced with the plunder of a cat they flay'd;  
 The lamp's round boss affords their ample shield;  
 Large shells of nuts their covering helmet yield;  
 And o'er the region with reflected rays  
 Tall groves of needles for their lances blaze.

PARNELL.

The Frogs are equally ingenious, and indeed seem much better provided both for offence and defence :—

φύλλοις μὲν μαλαγῶν κνήμας ἕως ἀμφεκάλυψαν·  
 Δώρηκας δ' εἶχον χλοερῶν πλατέων ἀπὸ τεύτλων·  
 φύλλα δὲ τῶν κραιμεῶν εἰς ἀσπίδας εὖ ἥσκησαν·  
 ἔγχος δ' ὀξύσχοινος ἐκάστω μακρὸς ἀρήρει·  
 καὶ κόρυθες κοχλιῶν λεπτῶν κράατ' ἀμφεκάλυπτον.†

With leaves of mallows each his legs incased,  
 Guarded his bosom with a corslet cut  
 From the green beet, with foliage stout of kail  
 Fashion'd his ample buckler, with a rush  
 Keen-tipt, of length tremendous, fill'd his gripe,  
 And on his brows set fast a cockle shell.

COWPER.

The Crabs are well described :—

ἦλθον δ' ἐξαίφνης νωπάκμονες, ἀγκυλοχῆλαι,  
 λοξοβάται, στρεβλοὶ, ψαλιδόστομοι, ὀστρακόδερμοι,

\* V. 123-130.

† V. 160-164.

ὄστοφυσῆς, πλατύνωτοι, ἀπιστίλβοντες ἐν ὤμοις,  
βλαιοσοὶ, χειροτένοντες, ἀπὸ στέργων ἐσορῶντες,  
ὀκτάποδες, δικάρηνοι, ἀχείρεες· οἱ δὲ καλεῖνται  
Καρκίνοι.

———— Sudden they came. Broad-back'd  
They were, and smooth like anvils, sickle-claw'd,  
Sideling in gait, their mouths with pincers arm'd,  
Shell-clad, crook-kneed, protruding far before  
Long hands and claws, with eye-holes in the breast,  
Legs in quaternion ranged on either side,—  
And Crabs their name.

COWPER.

Speech of  
Minerva.

But the speech of Minerva in the council of the gods is the acme of the poet's boldness and burlesque ; and it really seems to me to be so completely Aristophanic in its spirit and expressions, as to make it almost absurd to suppose it a production of the same age with the Iliad. "O Father," said the goddess, "never will I assist the Mice, be they never so distressed, for they have done me infinite harm, nibbling my wreaths and befouling my lamps to get at the oil. But I am more particularly annoyed at what they have lately done : they have actually gnawed all round a gown, which I had worked myself (one of the finest stuffs to be found anywhere), and have made holes in it. Now the fact is, the man of whom I got the stuff presses me and demands payment ; and I am excessively vexed about its being spoilt, because I have put all this work into what I may be said to have borrowed only, and I am unable to return it or its price.\* Nevertheless I will not stir for the Frogs either ; for they are utterly without discretion. The other day, as I was returning from battle, excessively fatigued, and wishing to sleep,

\* I do not pretend to understand this passage exactly ; there is evidently some confusion in the text. If *πράσσει με τόκους*, *exact usury of me*, is genuine, is it possible to reconcile such an allusion to the Homeric age?

Parnell translates it—

For which vile earthly duns thy daughter grieve ;  
The gods, that use no coin, have none to give.

they made such an outrageous noise that I could not sleep a wink ; and so I lay awake with a head-ache till the cock crew," &c. This, it must be allowed, is pretty free language, and savours strongly of an age in which sceptical speculations had excited a taste for a good deal of licentious raillery on the characters and habits of the popular divinities. It is precisely of a piece with what is to be found in every play of Aristophanes, and indeed in the mention of the *Frogs* and their names, anticipates many of the reiterated jokes of his audacious Muse. The oftener I read this pretty little poem (and no one can read it without pleasure), the more I seem to feel and detect its comparative modernism and truly Athenian parentage ; but Homer has so long and so popularly had the credit, such as it may be, of being the author of the *Batrachomyomachia*, that it would appear pedantic in this day to take notice of it for the purpose of criticism in any company less select than that of the *Homeric Poems*.\*

\* Philip Melancthon wrote a commentary on the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, and conceived the scope of the poet to have been to excite a hatred of tumults and seditions in the minds of the readers.

Pierre la Seine thought the object was to recommend to young men temperance in eating and drinking;—*Why*, I do not find written.—FABRIC. lib. ii. c. 2. s. 3.

It is a curious fact that the *Batrachomyomachia* was the first of the supposed Homeric poems printed at the revival of letters. Laonicus of Crete was the editor of the first edition, printed at Venice in 1486, in alternate red and black lines. It has been already remarked, that the Florentine edition of all the poems was two years later. Parnell's translation is neat and spirited, after the model of Pope ; and his Preface and Life of Zoilus are worth reading. They are both designed to flatter and vindicate the great translator of the *Iliad*.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE HYMNS.

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**Homeric Hymns.** THE Homeric Hymns, including the Hymns to Ceres and the fragment to Bacchus, which were discovered in the last century at Moscow, and edited by Ruhnken, amount to thirty-three; but, with the exception of those to Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Ceres, they are so short as not to consist of more than about three hundred and fifty lines in all. After what I have already stated of the controversies touching the origin and genuineness of the Iliad and Odyssey, and of the probability that the Odyssey was the production of an age subsequent to that of the Iliad, it is scarcely necessary to say here, that the inclination of almost all modern critics, with, I believe, the eminent exception of Hermann, is to deny that any of these hymns belong to Homer. Nevertheless it is certain that they are of high antiquity, and were commonly attributed by the ancients to Homer, with almost as much confidence as the Iliad and Odyssey. Thucydides\* quotes a passage from the hymn to Apollo, and alleges the authority of Homer, whom he expressly takes to be the writer, to prove an historical remark; and Diodorus Siculus,† Pausanias,‡ and many other ancient authors, cite different verses from these hymns,

\* Δηλοῖ δὲ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἦν, ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι τοῖσδε, αἷ ἐστιν ἐκ προοίμιου Ἀπόλλωνος

Ἀλλὰ σὺ Δῆλα, Φοῖβε, κ. τ. λ.—v. 146-150, 165-172.

THUCYD. lib. iii. c. 104.

The Scholiast remarks that προοίμιον is synonymous with ὕμνος, from οἶμη cantus.

† III. 66, IV. 2. IX.

‡ II. IV.



and always treat them as genuine Homeric remains. On the other hand, in the Life under the name of Plutarch nothing is allowed to be genuine but the Iliad and the Odyssey; Athenæus\* suspects one of the Homeridæ, or Homeric rhapsodes, to be the author of the hymn to Apollo; and the Scholiast to Pindar† testifies that one Cynæthus, a Chian rhapsode, who flourished in great reputation at Syracuse about 500 B. C., was supposed by many to be the real Homer of this particular poem. One thing, however, is certain, that these hymns are extremely ancient, and it is probable that some of them only yield to the Iliad and the Odyssey in remoteness of date. They vary in character and in poetical merit; but there is scarcely one amongst them that has not something to interest us, and they have all of them, in greater or less degrees, that simple Homeric liveliness which never fails to charm us wherever we meet with it.

These hymns are easily divisible into two classes; —1. Regular poems, consisting of a prologue, an appropriate legend or fable, and an epilogue or conclusion, of which class are the hymns to Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Ceres; 2. Mere preludes, or short preparatory addresses to, or eulogies of, the divinity at whose festival the rhapsode was present, and was about to recite some poem of greater length. All the rest of the Homeric hymns seem to be of this latter class.

1. The first and longest and most celebrated of what may be called the epic or heroic hymns is that to Apollo. The lines quoted by Thucydides, in which Homer is supposed to speak directly of himself, his blindness, and his residence in the island of Chios,

Hymn to  
Apollo.

\* Καὶ Ὅμηρος δὲ ἢ ΤΩΝ ὍΜΗΡΙΔΩΝ ΤΙΣ ἐν ταῖς εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα ὕμνοις φησίν.

φόρμιγγ' ἐν χείρεσσιν ἔχων, κ. τ. λ.—v. 515-516.

ATH. i. 19.

† Ἦν δὲ ὁ Κύναιθος Χῖος ὃς καὶ τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Ὁμήρου ποιημάτων τὸν εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα γεγραμμένον ὕμνον λέγεσθαι πεποιημέναι.—*Nem.* ii.

have, I believe, been the chief cause of this hymn being so much better known than any of the others. They are indeed beautiful verses; and if none worse had ever been attributed to Homer, the prince of poets would have had little reason to complain. He has been describing the Delian festival in honour of Apollo and Diana, and concludes this part of the poem with an address to the women of that island, to whom it is to be supposed that he had become familiarly known by his frequent recitations.

χαίρετε ὃ' ὑμεῖς πᾶσαι· ἐμεῖο δὲ καὶ μετόπισθε  
μνήσασθ', ὅππότε κέν τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων  
ἐνθάδ' αἰεῖρήται ξένος ταλαπείριος ἐλθών·  
ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὑμῖν ἀνὴρ ἡδιστος αἰοδῶν  
ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέφ' τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;  
ὑμεῖς δ' εἰ μάλ' αἰ πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθε ἄφ' ἡμέων·  
τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἷκετ' δὲ Χίῳ ἐνὶ παιπαλοέσση,  
τοῦ πᾶσαι μετόπισθεν ἀριστεύουσιν αἰοδαί.\*

Virgins! farewell—and oh! remember me

Hereafter, when some stranger from the sea,

A hapless wanderer, may your isle explore,  
And ask you, Maids, of all the bards you boast,  
Who sings the sweetest and delights you most—

Oh! answer all—"A blind old man and poor—  
Sweetest he sings—and dwells on Chios' rocky shore!"

The hymn to Apollo, however, is less complete as a whole than those to Mercury or Venus, and there is a disjointedness and want of unity discoverable in some parts, which might lead us to suspect that it is in fact a compilation of two or three separate poems. In particular, from the 178th line there seems to commence a distinct hymn in a strain materially different from that which precedes it. Not indeed that the pure Greek hymn, a very peculiar species of composition, is always founded on a regular plan, embracing all the attributes or all the adventures of the deity to whom it

is addressed ; the hymnist, more commonly, fixes upon one or two characteristic exploits, and confines himself to a detailed narrative of them only. Hence it was no more than natural that numerous hymns should be addressed to the same god or goddess by several poets, or even by the same individual, in each of which poems, for the most part, some new legend was introduced, and some new view of the character of the divinity taken. Yet even upon this confined plan, the particular subject is scarcely ever pursued uninterruptedly to the end ; the narrative form, for which the poet frequently abandons that of invocation, is again as frequently broken by reiterated addresses and enumerations of titles ; and thus an appearance of so many *fresh beginnings*, as it were, has been produced, which seems to have had great weight in inducing Wolf to pronounce all the Homeric hymns heterogeneous compilations from the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and other and distinct poems now lost. The internal evidence, however, of individual authorship in the hymns to Mercury\* and Venus, and in many of the others, is too much for this, and all the latter part of this hymn to Apollo is as essentially homogeneous and connected as are the verses of any poem ever written.

The first part of the hymn, concluding with the 178th line, is taken up with a description of the wanderings of Latona in search of a safe place of delivery ; her agreement with the island of Delos to receive her during her labour ; the birth of Apollo, and his assumption of the lyre, the bow, and the faculty of prophecy. This, in fact, seems a distinct hymn to the Delian Apollo, prefixed without much skill to another hymn to the Pythian Apollo, which commences with the 178th line, and has no other connection with the one preceding,

\* M. Schoell, indeed, says, that the interpolations in this hymn are so numerous that all unity of fable is destroyed ; a remark which I must take the liberty of pronouncing absolutely groundless.

except the fundamental identity of the divinity celebrated in both pieces. The imitations of this portion of the poem, in the hymns of Callimachus to Apollo and Delos, are so close and frequent, that they would scarcely escape the charge of downright plagiarism in a case where modern poets were concerned. I mention this as affording some light, by way of anticipation, towards an accurate estimate of the real merit of Callimachus as a poet, of which a fitter time will occur hereafter for speaking more at large; but it is certainly surprising that so much attention should be paid to that writer, and so much of his works read in some schools, where the venerable originals, from which he copied so abundantly, and which he has rarely equalled, are scarcely even mentioned, and are never read. It is with the Homeric hymns as it is with many of the plays, and all the minor pieces, of Shakspeare; they are darkened by the excessive lustre of the sun-like poetry at their side, and are esteemed the less in proportion to the splendour of their imputed kindred. Surely such poetry as the following, so rich, so lively and natural, deserves something better than the neglect with which it is ordinarily treated in schools and at college! It describes the labour of Latona and the birth of Apollo:—

εὖτ' ἐπὶ Δήλου ἔβαινε μογροστόκος Εἰλείθυια,  
τὴν τότε δὴ στόκος ἔϊλε, μειοίνησεν δὲ τεκέσθαι.  
ἀμφὶ δὲ φοίνικι βάλε πῆχξε, γοῦνα δ' ἔρεισε  
λειμῶνι μαλακῶ· μείδησε δὲ γαί' ὑπένερθεν,  
ἐκ δ' ἔθορε προφῶσθε· θεαὶ δ' ὀλβλυζαν ἅπασαι.  
ἔνθα σε, ἥϊε Φοῖβε, θεαὶ λοῦον ὕδατι καλῶ  
ἀγνῶς καὶ καθαρῶς, σπάρζαν δ' ἐν φάρεϊ λευκῶ  
λεπτῶ, νηγατέω· περὶ δὲ χρύσειον στέφανον ἦκαν.  
οὐδ' ἄρ' Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορα θῆσατο μήτηρ,  
ἀλλὰ Θέμις νέκταρ τε καὶ ἀμβροσίην ἐρατεινὴν  
ἀθανάτησιν χερσὶν ἐπήρξατο· χαίρε δὲ Λητώ,  
οὔνεκα τοξοφόρον καὶ καρτερὸν υἱὸν ἔτικτεν.  
αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ, Φοῖβε, κατέβρωσ' ἀμβροτον εἶδαι,

οὐ σέ γ' ἔπειτ' ἴσχον χρύσει σπρίφοι ἀσπαίροντα,  
 οὐδὲ τι ὀέσμα τ' ἔρυκε, λύοντο δὲ πείρατα πάντα.  
 αὐτίκα δ' ἀθανάτοισι μετῆύδα Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων  
 εἶη μοι κίθαρίς τε φίλη καὶ καμπύλα τόξα,  
 χρήσω τ' ἀνθρώποισι Διὸς νημερτέα βουλὴν\*.

But when Lucina reached the Delian strand,  
 Then labour seiz'd her; † yearning for the birth  
 She clasp'd the palm tree with her arms, and set  
 Her knees on the soft meadow, whiles the earth  
 Smiled underneath; forth rush'd the god to light,  
 And all the goddesses for wonder cried.  
 Then did they bathe thee in a fresh, pure stream.  
 Archer Apollo! and enswathed thy limbs  
 In a white robe, translucent, newly wrought,  
 With golden belt encinctured; nor thee  
 Thy mother fed, thou of the golden sword,  
 Apollo!—but with her immortal hands  
 Great Themis nectar and ambrosia gave  
 Delicious; whilst Latona joy'd to own  
 Her archer-son invincible. Meantime,  
 After the food celestial, neither zone  
 Of gold, nor folding robes, could hold  
 Thy panting breast, and all thy bands were burst.  
 Then didst thou speak to the Immortals round—  
 “Be mine, henceforth, the lyre and curved bow,  
 And Jove’s authentic will to tell to men!”

In the second part, or rather hymn, addressed to the Pythian god, the poet relates the deceit practised by the nymph Delphusa on Apollo, in order to deter him from founding his oracle at Delphi, his detection of it, and the punishment inflicted by him; the separate conception by Juno of the monster Typhaon; the destruction of the serpent Pytho, and the building of the famous temple; and all the latter part of this hymn is occupied with a very curious and very spirited account of the manner in which Apollo lays hold of the crew of a Cretan merchant vessel, drives them to the bay of Crissa, and ultimately converts them all into the priests and ministers of his new oracle. He had leaped upon

\* V. 115–132.

† Latona.

the deck of the ship in the shape of a dolphin,\* and frightened the sailors almost out of their senses; in vain did they attempt to land on the Pylia coast whither they were bound; the vessel would not obey the helm, but drifted on round the Peloponnesus into the Corinthian Gulf, and finally ran ashore close to the town of Crissa.†

ἐνθ' ἐκ νηὸς ὕρουσεν ἄναξ ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων,  
 ἀστέρι εἰδόμενος μέσῳ ἡματι, τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ πολλαὶ  
 σπινθαρίδες πωτῶντο, σέλας δ' εἰς οὐρανὸν ἤκεν·  
 ἐς δ' ἄδυτον κατέδυσε διὰ τριπόδων ἐριτίμων.  
 ἐν δ' ἄρ' ὄγε φλόγα δαΐε, πιφασκόμενος τὰ ἅ κῆλα,  
 πᾶσαν δὲ Κρίσσην κάτεχεν σέλας· αἱ δ' ὀλόλυξαν  
 Κρισσαίων ἄλοχοι, καλλιζώνοι τε θύγατρες,  
 Φοίβου ὑπὸ ῥιπῆς· μέγα γὰρ δέος εἶλεν ἑκάστον.  
 ἔνθεν δ' αὖτ' ἐπὶ νῆα, νόημ' ὥς, ἄλτο πέτεσθαι,  
 ἀνέρι εἰδόμενος αἰζήῳ τε κρατερῷ τε.‡

\* Δελφῖνι ἐικῳ. This, I imagine, was not the dolphin of modern times, which is a slender, elegant, and comparatively small fish; but, as seems clear from the descriptions in the classic poets generally, nothing more or less than the porpoise. Dante's dolphins, in the following passage, can be nothing but porpoises:—

Come i delfini, quando fanno segno  
 A' marinari con l' arco della schiena,  
 Che s' argomentin di campar lor legno;  
 Talor così a leggerar lor pena  
 Mostrava alcun de' peccator lo dosso,  
 E nascondeva in men che non balena.

*Inf. c. XXII. 19.*

—— As dolphins, that, in sign  
 To mariners, heave high their arched backs,  
 That thence forewarn'd they may advise to save  
 Their threaten'd vessel; so, at intervals,  
 To ease the pain his back some sinner show'd,  
 Then hid more nimbly than the lightning glance.

CARY.

† There is a striking general resemblance between the whole of this scene and the enchantments wrought by Ariel in the king's ship in "The Tempest."—Act I. sc. 2.

‡ V. 440–449.



Then from the ship rush'd the far-shooting king  
 Apollo, as a mid-day meteor, whence  
 Sparkles innumerable flash'd, and fill'd  
 The heavens with light; right through the tripods he  
 Pass'd to his secret fane, and there in flames  
 Burn'd visible with terrors manifest,  
 All Crissa blazed throughout, and Crissan wives  
 And beautifully cinctured maidens shriek'd,  
 Under the rushing of the god,—for fear,  
 Fear and deep awe had seized on every soul.  
 Then, swift as thought, he on the deck again  
 Burst with a bound in semblance of a youth.

The hymn ends with a passage that seems to contain a particle of satire and raillery in it. The captain of the Cretan vessel asks Apollo with great deference how he proposed to maintain them in his temple, situated as it was on a rock, which did not admit of any manner of culture; to which pertinent inquiry Phœbus coolly answers that they need not trouble their heads upon that subject, but take care to keep a knife in the right hand, and kill and cook the sheep and other cattle which the tribes of men would be sure to bring. The poet concludes with a verse which seems to have been the regular termination of the ancient hymn:—

ἀντάρ ἐγὼ καὶ σείῳ καὶ ἄλλης μνήσοιμ' αἰοιῶν.\*

II. The Hymn to Mercury is one of the most diverting poems in the Greek literature.† It is pre-eminently humorous in the best sense of the word, and, therefore, essentially different from the wit and

Hymn to  
Mercury.

\* V. 546. It is to be noticed, that throughout this hymn neither Apollo nor Diana are in any way connected in attributes or functions with the Sun or Moon. In the Hymn to the Sun (v. 2, 3,) he is said to be the son of Euryphaessa and Hyperion. See also the Hymn to the Moon, and Hymn to Mercury, v. 99, 100, where the Moon is called the daughter of Pallas.

† Hermann acutely remarks the comparative rarity of any hiatus or open vowels in this hymn; and justly concludes from this fact, that it must have been composed in an age long subsequent to that, or those of the Iliad and Odyssey, and when the use of the digamma as an aspiration or supporting prefix to initial vowels was almost obsolete.

comic license of Aristophanes. This hymn is perfectly regular and connected throughout, and tells the whole story of Mercury's famous felony on the oxen of Apollo, the altercation of the two gods, their reference to Jupiter, and final compromise. That it should be honourable to a deity to be celebrated for such thieving and such ineffable lying, as Mercury here plays off against the sagacious and truth-loving Apollo, is a very curious characteristic of the popular religion of the Greeks; and, indeed, the matter is so managed by the poet, that most readers get more fond of this little born rogue than of any other of the ancient dwellers on Olympus. In this hymn Hermes is gifted with the character of a perfect Spanish Picaro, a sort of Lazarillo de Tormes amongst the gods, stealing their goods, playing them tricks, and telling such enormous, such immortal, lies to screen himself from detection, that certainly no human thief could ever have the vanity to think of rivalling them on earth.\*

Mercury was the son of Jupiter and Maia, and was born in a cave about daybreak: by noon he had made a lyre out of the shell of a tortoise, which he caught crawling at the entrance of the cavern, and had learned to play upon it; and that same evening he stole and drove away a matter of fifty cows belonging to Apollo, and grazing on the Pierian hills. The description of the ancient lyre in this hymn has been followed by almost all writers in mentioning the subject:—

πῆζε δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέτροισι ταμὼν δόνακας καλᾶμοιο,  
 πειρήνας διὰ νῶτα λιθορρόνοιο χελώνης.  
 ἀμφὶ δὲ ὄερμα τάνυσσε βοὸς πραπίδεςσιν ἔησι,  
 καὶ πήχεις ἐνέθηκ', ἐπὶ δὲ ζυγὸν ἤραρεν ἀμφὺν.  
 ἑπτὰ δὲ συμφώνους ὄτων ἐτάνυσσατο χορδὰς.  
 αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τεῦξε φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄνδρμα,  
 πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέρος· ἢ δ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς

\* Sir Joshua Reynolds's admirable picture of "Mercury as a thief," is a complete embodying of the spirit of this hymn.

σμερδαλέον κονάεισε· θεὸς δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν ᾄδειν  
ἔξ αὐτοσχεδῆς πειρώμενος.\*

And through the stone-shell'd tortoise's strong skin  
At proper distances small holes he made,  
And fasten'd the cut stems of reeds within,  
And with a piece of leather overlaid  
The open space, and fixed the cubits in,  
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretch'd o'er all  
Symphonious chords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,  
He tried the chords, and made division meet  
Preluding with the plectrum, and there went  
Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet  
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent  
A strain of unpremeditated wit,  
Joyous, and wild, and wanton.

SHELLEY.

As to the cows, he makes them walk backward, and does so himself, taking the additional precaution of throwing away his sandals, and wrapping up his feet in the leafy twigs of shrubs. He meets one old labouring man, and recommends him to be blind and deaf to present objects, or he may suffer for it. When he comes to the Alpheus, he turns the cows into a meadow to feed, and kills and dresses two of them; and, after extinguishing the fire, he creeps about the dawn into his cradle again. The whole description is very graphic and spirited.

παννύχιος· καλὸν δὲ φῶς ἐπέλαμπε σελήνης·  
Κυλλήνης δ' αἶψ' αὐτὶς ἀφίκετο διὰ κάρηνα  
ῥοθριος, οὐδὲ τις οἱ δολιγῆς ὁδοῦ ἀντεβόλησεν  
οὔτε θεῶν μακάρων, οὔτε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·  
οὐδὲ κύνες λελάκοντο· Διὸς δ' ἐριούνης Ἑρμῆς  
δογμωθεὶς μεγάροιο διὰ κλήϊθρον ἔδουεν,  
αὔρη ὀπωρινῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἥϊ' ὁμίχλη.  
Ἰθύνας δ' ἀντροῦ ἐξίκετο πίονα νηὸν  
ἦκα ποσὶ προειδῶν· οὐ γὰρ κτύπεν, ὥσπερ ἐπ' οὔδει.  
ἔσσυμένως δ' ἄρα λίκνον ἐπώχετο κύδιμος Ἑρμῆς.

σπάργανον ἄμφ' ὤμοις εἰλυμένος, ἥντε τέκνον  
νήπιον, ἐν παλάμῃσι παρ' ἰγνύσι λαῖφος ἀθύρων,  
κεῖτο, χέλυεν ἐρατὴν ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χεῖρὸς ἔέργων.\*

All night he work'd in the serene moonshine;—  
But when the light of day was spread abroad,  
He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.

On his long-wandering, neither man nor god  
Had met him, since he kill'd Apollo's kine,

Nor had a house-dog bark'd upon his road.  
Now he obliquely through the key-hole pass'd,  
Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

Right through the temple of the spacious cave  
He went with soft light feet—as if his tread  
Fell not on earth—no sound their falling gave;  
Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread  
The swaddling clothes about him, and the knave  
Lay playing with the covering of his bed  
With his right hand about his knees—the left  
Held his beloved lyre.

SHELLEY.

His mother suspects him of some roguish adventure, and predicts that Apollo will discover him and punish him severely; to all which expostulation he answers, that he is determined to provide, by a due exercise of his talents, for the comfortable maintenance of his mother and himself; and as for Apollo, if he should make any disturbance about the cows, Mercury declares he will immediately go and commit a burglary on the Pythian temple, and steal twice the value in tripods and robes and gold, and adds, that his mother might come and see him do it if she liked.

Meantime Apollo misses his cattle, and, by inquiring of the old labouring man who had seen Mercury, and by help of augury, he discovers that his brother of the half blood is the thief. He flies to Cyllene, though he is something puzzled by the extraordinary foot-marks in the sand at Pylos, and enters the cave. Mercury rolls himself up into a ball, puts his head under the

clothes, and pretends to be asleep. However, Apollo, after searching every hole and corner in the cave, and looking into Maia's wardrobe and storeroom, lights upon our little friend, and addresses him thus:—

ὦ παῖ, ὅς ἐν λίκνῳ κατακείσαι, μήνυέ μοι βοῦς  
 θᾶπτον· ἐπεὶ τάχα νῶϊ διοισόμεθ' οὐ κατὰ κόσμον.  
 ῥίψω γάρ σε βαλὼν ἐς τάρταρον ἡερόεντα,  
 εἰς ψόφον αἰνόμερον καὶ ἀμήχανον· οὐδὲ σε μήτηρ  
 ἐς φάος, οὐδὲ πατὴρ ἀναλύσεται, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γαίῃ  
 ἐρῶήσεις, ὀλίγοισιν ἐν ἀνδράσιν ἡγεμονεύων.\*

————— “ Little cradled rogue, declare  
 Of my illustrious heifers—where they are!

“ Speak quickly! or a quarrel straight 'twixt us  
 Must rise, and the event will be that I  
 Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus  
 In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;—  
 Nor shall your father, nor your mother loose  
 The bars of that black dungeon—utterly  
 You shall be cast out from the light of day  
 To rule the ghosts of men—unblest as they!”

SHELLEY.

To which Mercury answers:—

Λητοῖδῃ, τίνα τοῦτον ἀπήνεα μῦθον ἔειπες ;  
 καὶ βοῦς ἀγραύλους διζήμενος ἐνθάδ' ἰκάνεις ;  
 οὐκ ἴδον, οὐ πυθόμην, οὐκ ἄλλου μῦθον ἄκουσα·  
 οὐκ ἂν μηνύσαιμ', οὐκ ἂν μήνυτρον ἀροίμην.  
 οὔτε βοῶν ἐλατῆρι, κραταιῷ φωτὶ, ἔοικα.  
 οὐκ ἐμὸν ἔργον τοῦτο, πάρος δέ μοι ἄλλα μέμηλεν.  
 ὕπνος ἔμοιγε μέμηλε καὶ ἡμετέρης γάλα μητρὸς,  
 σπάργανά τ' ἀμφ' ὥμοισιν ἔχειν καὶ δερμὰ λοετρά.  
 μή τις τοῦτο πύθοιτο, πόθεν τόδε νεῖκος ἐτύχθη.  
 καί κεν δὴ μέγα θαῦμα μετ' ἀθανάτοισι γένοιτο,  
 παῖδα νέον γεγαῶτα διὰ προθύροιο περῆσαι  
 Βουσί μετ' ἀγραύλοισι· τὸ δ' ἀπρεπέως ἀγορεύεις.

χθῆς γενόμεν, ἀπαλοὶ δὲ πόδες, τρηχεῖα δ' ὑπὸ χθών.  
 εἰ δὲ θέλεις, πατὴρ κεφαλὴν, μέγαν ὄρκον, ὁμοῦμαι,  
 μὴ μὲν ἐγὼ μήτ' αὐτὸς ὑπὶ σχομαι αἴτιος εἶναι,  
 μήτε τιν' ἄλλον ἔπωπα βῶων κτυπὸν ὑμετέρων,  
 αἵτινες αἰ βόες εἰσὶ· τὸ δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούω.\*

————— “ Son

- Of great Latona, what a speech is this!  
 “ Why come you here to ask me what is done  
 With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?  
 I have not seen them, nor from any one  
 Have heard a word of the whole business;  
 If you should promise an immense reward,  
 I could not tell more than you now have heard.
- “ An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,  
 And I am but a little new-born thing,  
 Who, yet, at least, can think of nothing wrong;—  
 My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling  
 The cradle clothes about me all day long,  
 Or, half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,  
 And to be wash'd in water clear and warm,  
 And hush'd, and kiss'd, and kept secure from harm.
- “ O! let not e'er this quarrel be averr'd!  
 Th' astounded gods would laugh at you, if e'er  
 You should allege a story so absurd,  
 As that a new-born infant forth could fare  
 Out of his house after a savage herd!  
 I was born yesterday; my small feet are  
 Too tender for the roads so hard and rough;—  
 And if you think that this is not enough,
- “ I swear a great oath by my Father's head,  
 That I stole not your cows, and that I know  
 Of no one else who might, or could, or did;  
 Whatever things cows are, I do not know,  
 For I have only heard the name.”

SHELLEY.

This is pretty hard swearing. Apollo, however, is inflexible, and catches the boy in his arms; the boy behaves in a sort of way that makes it as difficult for



Apollo to hold him as for me to describe the adventure ; and the result, after much altercation, in which Mercury, in vain, endeavours to cozen his brother—

*πολύμητις ἐὼν πολυμήχανον εὔρεν—\**

diamond cutting diamond—they both go to Olympus, and Apollo lays his complaint before Jupiter. Mercury makes the following defence :—

Zeῦ πάτερ, ἤτοι ἐγὼ σοὶ ἀληθείην καταλέξω·  
 νημερτής τε γάρ εἰμι, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ψεύδεσθαι·  
 ἦλθεν ἐς ἡμετέρου διζήμενος εἰλίποδας βοῦς  
 σήμερον ἡελίοιο νέον ἐπιτελλομένοιο·  
 οὐδὲ Διῶν μακάρων ἄγε μάρτυρας, οὐδὲ κατόπτας.  
 μνύειν δ' ἐκέλευεν ἀναγκαίης ὑπὸ πολλῆς.  
 πολλὰ δὲ μ' ἠπειλήσε βαλεῖν ἐς τάρταρον εὐρύν,  
 οὔνεχ' ὁ μὲν τέρεν ἄνθος ἔχει φιλοκυδέος ἥξις,  
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ χθιζὺς γενόμην· τὰ δὲ οἶδε καὶ αὐτός·  
 οὔτι βοῶν ἐλατῆρι, κραταιῷ φωτὶ, εἰοικώς.  
 πείθεο· (καὶ γὰρ ἐμεῖο πατήρ φίλος εὖχεται εἶναι)  
 ὥς οὐκ οἴκαδ' ἔλασσα βίας, (ὥς ὕλξις εἶην)  
 οὐδ' ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἔειην· τόδῃ δ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύω·  
 Ἡέλιον μάλα αἰδέομαι καὶ δαίμονας ἄλλους,  
 καὶ σε φίλῳ, καὶ τοῦτοι ὑπίζομαι οἶσθα καὶ αὐτός,  
 ὥς οὐκ αἵτιός εἰμι μέγαν δ' ἐπιδαίομαι ὄρκον·  
 οὐ μὰ τὰδ' ἀθανάτων εὐκρίσματα προθύραια,  
 καὶ ποτ' ἐγὼν τούτῳ τίσω ποτὲ νηλέα φωνήν,  
 καὶ κρατερῷ περ ἐόντι· σὺ δ' ὀπλοτέροισιν ἄρηγε.†

“Great Father! you know clearly before hand  
 That all which I shall say to you is sooth;  
 I am a most veracious person, and  
 Totally unacquainted with untruth.  
 At sun-rise Phœbus came, but with no band  
 Of gods to bear him witness, in great ruth,  
 To my abode, seeking his heifers there,  
 And saying, I must show him where they are,—

\* V. 319.

† V. 368–386.

“Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss!  
 I know that every Apollonian limb  
 Is clothed with speed, and might, and manliness,  
 As a green bank with flowers; but, unlike him,  
 I was born yesterday, and you may guess  
 He well knew this when he indulged the whim  
 Of bullying a poor little new-born thing  
 That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

“Am I like a strong fellow that steals kine?  
 Believe me, dearest Father! (such you are!)  
 This driving of the herds is none of mine;  
 Across my threshold did I wander ne’er,  
 So may I thrive! I reverence the divine  
 Sun and the gods, and I love you, and care  
 Even for this hard accuser, who must know  
 I am as innocent as they or you.

“I swear by these most gloriously wrought portals—  
 (It is, you will allow, an oath of might!)  
 Through which the multitude of the Immortals  
 Pass and repass for ever, day and night,  
 Devising schemes for the affairs of worlds—  
 That I am guiltless; and I will requite,  
 Although my enemy be great and strong,  
 His cruel threat! Do thou defend the young!”

SHELLEY.

Mercury accompanies this speech with divers winkings of the eye and nods of the head to Jupiter, to let him know the exact state of the case. The end is, that Jove bursts into a violent fit of laughter to see his roguish child—

*εἶ καὶ ἐπισταμένως ἀρνεύμενον ἀμφὶ βόεσσιν—*

“lying so well and skilfully about the cows,” but intimates by a sign to Hermes, that he has done enough to establish his reputation, and that it is time he should now really discover the truth. Mercury obeys, leads Apollo to the place where the cows were concealed, and gratifies him with the gift of his lyre. Apollo is transported with delight at the possession of this instrument, and thereupon they swear an eternal friendship. The hymnist ends his celebration of the god with saying of him, in not very pious language, as it should seem—

παῦρα μὲν οἶν ὀνίνησι, τὸ δ' ἄκριτον ἡπεριπέυει  
 νύκτα δι' ὀρρηαίην φῦλα θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.\*

In few things does he help—more oft deceives  
 Through the dark night the tribes of mortal men.

III. But by far the most beautiful of the Ho- Hymn to  
Venus.  
 meric hymns—indeed, for its length equal in  
 beauty to any part of the Homeric poems—is the Hymn  
 to Venus. No poet ever surpassed the richness and  
 elegance, the warmth and delicacy, the dignity and  
 tenderness, of this exquisite composition. It has al-  
 ways seemed to me to be conceived in an older and  
 more Homeric spirit than any of the other hymns;  
 and it is remarkable for being founded entirely on the  
 loves of Venus and Anchises, and for containing† a  
 repetition of the prophecy of the Iliad, that Æneas and  
 his posterity should reign over Troy. It is indeed quite  
 Trojan in its subject and sentiments, and there is one  
 passage‡ in it by which we learn that the Phrygians  
 spoke a language entirely different from the Trojan,  
 and by which we may infer that the Trojans, as has  
 often been conjectured, were Greeks in speech§ and  
 blood as they certainly were in religion. Bryant ob-  
 jects this very circumstance to the authenticity of the  
 Iliad, remarking that no mention is ever made of the  
 worship of Cybele. The fact is, the worship of Cybele  
 was a Phrygian worship, and the Trojans are not Phry-  
 gians in Homer, though they are in Virgil. Lucretius  
 seems to have borrowed the thought of his famous in-  
 vocation of Venus from the opening lines of this hymn.  
 The following passage is by no means the most poetical  
 in the poem, and yet I think few persons can read it

\* V. 574, 575.

† V. 197-199.

‡ V. 113, 114.

§ See, however, the language of Æschylus in the Agamemnon, v. 1058-1060, 1068-1071, and 1210-1212, where Clytemnestra and the Chorus treat Cassandra as a barbarian, and seem to suppose it natural that she should be ignorant of Greek. The Chorus calls Troy, ἀλλόθρουρον πῶλον.

without feeling its genuine beauty. Venus re-assumes her own proper appearance, and awakes Anchises :—

ὄρσεο Δαρδανίδη· τί νυ νήγρετον ὕπνον ἰαύεις ;  
καὶ φράσαι, εἴ τι ὁμοίῃ ἐγὼν ἰνδάλλωμαι εἶναι.  
οἶην δὴ με τὸ πρῶτον ἐν φθαλμοῖσι νήσας.

ὥς φάθ'· ὁ δ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο μάλ' ἐμμαπέως ὑπάκουσεν·  
ὥς δ' εἶδεν δειρὴν τε καὶ ὄμματα κάλ'· Ἀφροδίτης,  
τάρξεσέν τε καὶ ἥσσε παρακλιδὸν ἔτραπεν ἄλλῃ.  
ἀψ' δ' αὖτις χλαίνῃ τε καλύψατο καλὰ πρόσωπα.  
καί μιν λισσόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·  
αὐτίκα σ' ὥς ταπρῶτα, θεὰ, ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,  
ἔγνων, ὥς θεὸς ἦσθα· σὺ δ' οὐ νημερτές εἶπες.  
ἀλλὰ σε πρὸς Ζηνὸς γουνάζομαι Αἰγιόχοιο,  
μή με ζῶντ' ἀμνηνὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἐάσῃς  
ναῖειν, ἀλλ' ἐλέαιρ'· ἐπεὶ οὐ βιοθάλμιος ἀνὴρ  
γίγνεται, ὅς τε θεαῖς εὐιάζεται ἀθανάτησι.

τὸν δ' ἡμέλειτ' ἔπειτα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη·  
Ἀγχίση, κύνιστε καταβνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,  
δάρσει, μηδὲ τι σῆσι μετὰ φρεσὶ δεῖδιθι λίην.  
οὐ γάρ τοί τι δέος, παθέειν κακὸν ἐξ ἐμέθεν γε,  
οὐδ' ἄλλων μακάρων· ἐπειὴ φίλος ἐσσί θεοῖσι.  
σοὶ δ' ἔσται φίλος υἱός, ὅς ἐν Τρώεσσι ἀνάξει,  
καὶ παῖδες παίδεσσι διαμπερές ἐκγεγάονται·  
τῷ δὲ καὶ Αἰνείας ὄνομ' ἔσσεται, οὐνεκά μ' αἰνὸν  
ἔσχεν ἄχος.\*

“ Anchises, wake;  
Thy fond repose and lethargy forsake!  
Look on the nymph who late from Phrygia came,  
Behold me well—say if I seem the same!”

At her first call the chains of sleep were broke.  
And, starting from his bed, Anchises woke.  
But when he Venus view'd without disguise,  
Her shining neck beheld and radiant eyes,—  
Awed and abash'd, he turn'd his head aside,  
Attempting with his robe his face to hide.  
Confused with wonder, and with fear oppress'd,  
In winged words he thus the queen addressed:

“ When first, O Goddess, I thy form beheld,  
 Whose charms so far humanity excell'd,  
 To thy celestial power my vows I paid,  
 And with humility implored thy aid.  
 But thou, for secret cause to me unknown,  
 Didst thy divine immortal state disown.  
 But now, I beg thee by the filial love  
 Due to thy father, Ægis-bearing Jove,  
 Compassion on my human state to show,  
 Nor let me lead a life infirm below!  
 Defend me from the woes which mortals wait,  
 Nor let me share of men the common fate!  
 Since never man with length of days was blest  
 Who in delights of love a deity possess'd.”

To him Jove's beauteous daughter thus replied:—  
 “ Be bold, Anchises! in my love confide;  
 Nor me, nor other god, thou need'st to fear,  
 For thou to all the heavenly host art dear.  
 Know, from our loves, thou shalt a son obtain,  
 Who over all the realm of Troy shall reign;  
 From whom a race of monarchs shall descend,  
 And whose posterity shall know no end;  
 To him thou shalt the name Æneas give,  
 As one for whose conception I must grieve!”

CONGREVE.

οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγέ σε τοῖον ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἐλοίμην,  
 ἀθάνατόν τ' εἶναι καὶ ζῶειν ἥματα πάντα.  
 ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν τοιοῦτος εἶὼν εἰδός τε δέμας τε  
 ζώοις, ἡμέτερός τε πόσις κεκλημένος εἴης,  
 οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτά μ' ἄλλος πυκινὰς φρένας ἀμφικαλύπτει.  
 νῦν δέ σε μὲν τάχα γῆρας ὁμοῖον ἀμφικαλύψει,  
 νηλεῖς, τό γ' ἔπειτα παρίσταται ἀνθρώποισιν,  
 εὐλόμενον, καματοηρὸν, ὃ, τε στύγουνσι θεοί περ.\*

After telling the story of Tithonus, Venus goes on in  
 a strain of real human affection for Anchises:—

“ On terms like these I never can desire  
 Thou shouldst to immortality aspire  
 Couldst thou, indeed, as now thou art, remain—  
 Thy strength, thy beauty, and thy youth retain;  
 Couldst thou for ever thus my husband prove,

I might live happy in thy endless love ;  
 Nor should I e'er have cause to dread the day  
 When I must mourn thy loss and life's decay.  
 But thou, alas! too soon and sure must bend  
 Beneath the woes which painful age attend;  
 Inexorable age! whose wretched state  
 All mortals dread, and all immortals hate!"

CONGREVE.

In no Greek or Latin classical poem, that I remember, is Venus represented with such consummate dignity, tenderness, and passion, as in this hymn; and in this particular it certainly differs a good deal from the more popular conception of the Goddess of Love in the *Iliad*. Difficult as the story was to tell, it is told with unbroken decorum, and constitutes a striking example of that instinctive propriety of manner and words, in the display of which the Greek poets set all others at defiance.

Hymn to  
 Ceres.

IV. The manuscript of the Hymn to Ceres, which in some parts is in a very fragmentary state, was discovered in the last century by C. F. Matthæi, in the library of the Holy Synod at Moscow, and communicated by him, together with a few lines of a lost Hymn to Bacchus, to David Ruhnken, a professor at the university of Leyden. Ruhnken published it with critical notes. There has been much diversity of opinion concerning the genuineness of this poem, or, I should rather say, its identity with the Homeric hymn to Ceres, which certainly existed in the second century, and is often quoted by Pausanias.\* The passages so cited by Pausanias differ in a slight degree from lines to be found in this hymn. The scholiast to the *Alexipharmica* of Nicander says, that "Ceres laughed at the ludicrous speeches of Iambe, as is related in the hymns ascribed to Homer." As in the opinion of Ruhnken no such incident is mentioned in this hymn, as we have it, he concludes the scholiast to be mistaken, or not to

\* Attic. 38. Messen. 38. Corinth. 14.



allude to this poem. But, in point of fact, the passage, as it now stands, may very well answer all that the remark of the scholiast would lead us to expect. Ceres sits for a long time in profound melancholy,—

πρίν γ' ὅτε δὴ χλεῦρης μὲν Ἰάμβη κέδον' εἰδυῖα  
πολλὰ παρασώπτουσ' ἐτρέψατο πότνια, ἀγνήν,  
μειοῖσσαι, γελάσαι τὲ, καὶ Ἥλαον σχεῖν θυμόν.\*

Till wise Iambe with her jests and gibes  
Innumerable, caused the holy queen  
To smile, to laugh, and have a cheerful mind.

Wolf seems to hold this discovered hymn very cheap; but he speaks with reference to its claim to absolute genuineness: without allowing which, we may certainly consider it in the same point of view as we do the other hymns commonly attributed to Homer; and though it is not equal in vigour and beauty to the three principal hymns before mentioned, it is still a very lively and picturesque poem, smooth and flowing in its language, and curious and peculiar in some of its incidents. It well deserves a scholar's attention.

The story is that Pluto, being enamoured of Proserpine, the daughter of Ceres, carries her off secretly, with the connivance, and by the aid, of Jupiter. Ceres wanders over the earth with blazing torches in search of Proserpine. Having learnt from Hecate and the Sun that the maiden had been carried away by Pluto, she forsakes Olympus and assumes the shape of a woman. She goes to Eleusis, and is introduced into the house of Celeus the king, by his daughters, who had come with their pitchers to a fountain to fetch water. Metanira, wife of Celeus, had an infant boy at that time: Ceres undertakes to nurse him; and she, in order to make him immortal, places little Demophoon every night in the midst of the fire, by those means to burn away the corruptible part of his nature. The

child thrive wonderfully under this caustic treatment. Metanira one night watched the actions of the nurse, and upon seeing her boy placed in the flames, cried out with terror. Ceres snatches him up, and then declares the spell broken and the process of immortalization frustrated. Meantime Ceres has blasted the earth with sterility, and Jupiter sends repeated messages to induce her to remit her anger and return to Olympus: she, however, refuses all reconciliation, till Jupiter despatches Mercury to Hades to order Pluto to give up Proserpine. Pluto obeys, but gives her a pomegranate seed\* to eat; and the conclusion is, that Ceres is pacified, upon an understanding that Proserpine is to pass two-thirds of the year with her, and the remaining third only with her husband.†

The Poet says that Pluto seized her—

παίζουσας κούρησι σὺν Ὀψεανῷ βαθυκάλυπτει,  
 ἄνθεά τ' αἰνυμένην, ἕβδα, καὶ κρόκον, ἥδ' ἴα καλὰ.  
 λείμῳν' ἄν μαλακὸν, καὶ ἀγαλλίδας ἥδ' ὑάκινθον,  
 ἰάρκισσόν θ', ὃν φύσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρη  
 Γαῖα Λιδὸς βουλῇσι χαρίζομένη Πολυδέκτη,  
 Δαυμαστὸν γανώντα, σέβας τότε πᾶσιν ἰδέσθαι  
 ἀθανάτοισ τε θεοῖς ἥδ' Ἰνῆτοῖς ἀνθρώποις·  
 τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ῥίζης ἑκατὸν κάρα ἐξεπεφύκει,  
 κηῶδι δ' ὁδμῇ πᾶς οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθεῖν,  
 γαῖά τε πᾶς ἐγέλασσε καὶ ἀλκυρὸν οἶδμα θαλάσσης.  
 ἥ δ' ἄρα θαμβήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶν ἅμ' ἅμφω  
 καλὸν ἄθρυμα λαβεῖν· χάνει δὲ χθὼν εὐρυάγυια  
 Νύσιον ἀμπεδίον, τῇ ἔρουσεν ἄναξ Πολυδέγμων  
 ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι, Κρόνου πολυώνυμος υἱός.  
 ἀρπάξας δ' ἀέκουσαν ἐπὶ χερυθείοισιν ὄχλοισιν  
 ἦγ' ὀλοφυρομένην, ἰάχῃσ' ὃ' ἄρ' ὄρθια φωνῇ.‡

In Nysia's vale, with nymphs a lovely train,  
 Sprung from the hoary father of the main,

\* Ῥεῖης κρόκον.

† Preface to Hole's Translation of the Hymn to Ceres.

‡ V. 5-20.

Fair Proserpine consumed the fleeting hours  
 In pleasing sports, and pluck'd the gaudy flowers;  
 Around them wide the flamy crocus glows,  
 Through leaves of verdure blooms the opening rose;  
 The hyacinth declines his fragrant head,  
 And purple violets deck the enamell'd mead;  
 The fair narcissus, far above the rest,  
 By magic form'd, in beauty rose confest.  
 So, Jove, t' ensnare the virgin's thoughtless mind,  
 And please the Ruler of the Shades design'd,  
 He caused it from the opening earth to rise  
 Sweet to the scent, alluring to the eyes.  
 Never did mortal or celestial power  
 Behold such vivid tints adorn a flower.  
 From the deep root a hundred branches sprung,  
 And to the winds ambrosial odours flung,  
 Which, lightly wafted on the wings of air,  
 The gladden'd earth and heaven's wide circuit share;  
 The joy-dispensing fragrance spreads around,  
 And ocean's briny swell with smiles is crown'd.

Pleased with the sight, nor deeming danger nigh,  
 The fair beheld it with desiring eye;  
 Her eager hand she stretch'd to seize the flower,  
 (Beauteous illusion of th' ethereal power!)  
 When, dreadful to behold! the rocking ground  
 Disparted—widely yawn'd a gulf profound!—  
 Forth rushing from the black abyss arose  
 The gloomy monarch of the realm of woes,  
 Pluto, from Saturn sprung)—the trembling maid  
 He seized, and to his golden car conveyed;  
 Borne by immortal steeds the chariot flies,  
 And thus she pours her supplicating cries.

HOLB.

When Ceres begins her fictitious account of herself to the daughters of Ceceus, she says she comes over sea from Crete—

*νῦν αὖτε Κρήτηθεν ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης  
 ἤλυθον.\**

And it is worth remarking, that thrice† in the Odyssey, Ulysses, when fabricating a history of his birth and

\* V. 123, 124.

† ζ'. XIV. 199. Ν'. XIII. 256 Τ'. XIX. 181.

parentage, declares he was born in Crete. This brings the

*Κρήτες αἰὲν ψεύσται*

of Epimenides, quoted in the Epistle to Titus,\* to our recollection, and may induce us to believe that Cretan mendacity was of so ancient a date as to have become a subject of satirical allusion even in the time of Homer.

The change in the person of Ceres, when overlooked by Metanira, and the effects of the manifestation of her divinity, are told in the following fine lines:—

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ, μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε,  
γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη· περί τ' ἀμφί τε κάλλος ἄητο.  
ὁδμὴ δ' ἱμερόεσσα θυέντων ἀπὸ πέπλων  
σπίδνατο, τῇλε δὲ φέγγος ἀπὸ χροῶς ἀθανάτοιο  
λάμπει θεῆς, ξανθαὶ δὲ κόμαι κατενένοθεν ὤμους.  
αὐγῆς δ' ἐπλήσθη πυκινὸς δόμος, ἀστεροπῆς ὥς,  
βῆ δὲ δι' ἐκ μέγαρων τῆς δ' αὐτίκα γούνατ' ἔλυστο.  
δηρὸν δ' ἄφθογγος γένετο χρόνον, οὐδὲ τι παιδὸς  
μνήσατο τηλυγέτοιο ἀπὸ δαπέδου ἀνελέσθαι.†

This said; the front of age so late assumed  
Dissolved,—her face with charms celestial bloom'd.  
The sacred vesture that around her flew  
Through the wide air ambrosial odours threw;  
Her lovely form with sudden radiance glow'd,  
Her golden locks in wreaths of splendour flow'd;  
Through the dark palace stream'd a flood of light,  
As cloud-engender'd fires illume the night  
With sudden blaze;—then swiftly from their view.  
Urged by indignant rage, the goddess flew.

In Metanira's breast amazement reign'd;  
Silent she stood; nor long her knees sustain'd  
Their tottering weight; she sank in grief profound.  
The child neglected, shrieking on the ground,  
Beside her lay.

HOLC.

\* C. I. v. 12.

† V. 175-183.

When Proserpine is about to leave Pluto for the upper world, he gives her, as before mentioned, or rather forces her, to eat a pomegranate seed, *χοιῆς κόκκον*, thereby, as Ovid\* says, to preclude her from availing herself of his promise that he would restore her to her mother, provided she, Proserpine, had eaten nothing in his dominions.

In this hymn we have probably the earliest mention of the Eleusinian mysteries now extant:—

————— ὄργια καλὰ —————

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

σεμνὰ, τὰ γ' οὕτως ἐστὶ παρεξέμεν, οὔτε πυθέσθαι.  
οὔτ' ἀρχέειν· μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν ἄχρ' ἰσχάνει αὐδὴν.  
ὕλκιος, ὅς τ' αὖθις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων·  
ὅς δ' ἀτελής, ἱερῶν ὅς τ' ἄμμορος, οὔ ποθ' ὁμοίων  
αἴσαν ἔχει, φθιμένος περ' ὑπὸ ζέφω εὐρώετι.†

Those sacred mysteries, for the vulgar ear  
Unmeet, and known, most impious to declare!  
Oh! let due reverence for the gods restrain  
Discourses rash, and check enquiries vain!

Thrice happy he, among the favour'd few,  
To whom 'tis giv'n those glorious rites to view!  
A fate far different the rejected share;  
Unblest, unworthy her protecting care,  
They 'll perish, and with chains of darkness bound  
Be plunged for ever in the dark profound.

HOLE.

The following remarks by this rather lax translator deserve notice:—

“Herodotus, in the second book of his History, relates that the mystic rites of Isis were originally carried from Egypt to Greece by the daughters of Danaus; and that the Pelasgic women were instructed by them in the nature, design, and form of their celebration. From the same authority, strengthened by that of Apollodorus, it has been supposed that these mysteries, disguised under other names and other forms,

\* Metam. V. 8.

† V. 476-482.

were afterwards celebrated at Eleusis in honour of Ceres, and obtained the name of Thesmophoria.\*

“If this Hymn should not be supposed to allude to the Egyptian Isis, figured under the character of Ceres, and to Proserpine, as an emblem of the corn† being hidden part of the year beneath the earth—may not the story on which it is founded be simply this? Pluto, probably King of the Molossians, wages war against the Eleusinians, wastes their country, and carries off their corn: a famine ensues. Jupiter, his brother, ruler over a great part of Greece, who had connived at the invasion, thinks proper at length to obtain a peace for them, on their paying to Pluto one-third of their tillage by way of tribute. They again cultivate their country, and Rhea, Ceres, and Jupiter are reconciled; that is to say, the earth produces corn, and the people are under the protection of the neighbouring king. The conclusion of the story seems evidently allegorical, and intended to convey this plain and excellent moral—‘That those nations shall prosper who apply diligently to agriculture and the cultivation of their lands.’ Hence Plutus (Riches) was called the Son of Ceres.”‡

The history and real meaning of the Greek mysteries form one of the most curious and deeply interesting subjects of enquiry which the philosophic scholar can propose to himself. The *belief* of enlightened Paganism rested on them. Varro§ said that there were three kinds of Theology: 1. The mythical or fabulous, which belonged to the poets; 2. The civil or political, which was founded on the mythical, and belonged to the magistrate; 3. The physical or natural,

\* But the Thesmophoria were distinct from the Eleusinian rites, were celebrated at Athens, and attended by women only.

† So *Phersephone* signifies in the Phœnician language, whence *Proserpine* is supposed to be derived. The Phœnician word in sound is *Peri-saphoun*, fructus occultus. Robinson ad Theogon. Hesiod. n. ad v. 733.

‡ Hole's notes to Hymn to Ceres.

§ In August. Civ. Dei, lvi. c. 5.



which belonged to the philosopher. This last, the natural theology of the Greeks, was secretly preserved in the mysteries, and it may be conjectured that the *esoteric* or inward doctrine of the Pythagoreans and Platonists was in many respects similar to that taught to the initiated. At least there was a close analogy between them.

I have no intention of losing myself, or of confounding my reader, by any attempt to enter systematically into this, the profoundest subject connected with the history of the Pagan religion and philosophy. Neither shall I take notice of the Cabeiric or Samothracian mysteries (though perhaps the oldest and purest of all); nor of the Telchines, the Dactyli, or the Corybantes. A proper place may occur to speak of these respectively hereafter; at present my wish is to give, if I can, a slight insight into the nature of the far more celebrated mysteries of Eleusis, the fabulous origin of which is described, and, to the best of my recollection, the earliest allusion to which is made, in this hymn.

These mysteries were probably Egyptian in their origin. They were brought, according to the popular legend, to Peloponnesus by the family of Danaus.\* When that part of Greece was invaded and revolutionized by the Dorians, the mysteries were lost everywhere except amongst the Arcadians. They were not introduced into Attica and established at Eleusis till about a century afterwards, in the reign of Erechtheus.

The three mystical divinities (all the mysteries involved a sacred Triad) were Demeter or Ceres, Phersephone or Proserpine, and Iacchus; the last being altogether distinct from the Theban Bacchus. These three were the Greek copies of the Egyptian Triad—Isis, Osiris, and Horus. The Egyptian story was, that Isis was sister and wife of Osiris, by whom she had a son, Horus; that Typhon was the brother of.

\* Her. Euterp. 171.

and murdered, Osiris and also the youthful Horus ; that Isis wandered to Byblus, a city of Phœnicia, in search of the body of her husband, which had been carried thither in its coffin by the waves. The coffin had rested on a plant called Erica, with which it had become incorporated. The king of the country ordered the wood to be cut, and a pillar in his palace to be made of it. Isis seated herself by a fountain and wept bitterly ; she would speak to no one, except the maidens of the queen Astarte. Her garments exhaled a divine odour. Astarte sent for the stranger, and committed her infant child to her nursing. Isis applied her finger, instead of her breast, to the infant's mouth, and thereby burnt away all the corruptible parts of his body. She then flew, in the form of a swallow, to the pillar of Erica, and uttered a profound groan. Astarte, who had been watching this scene, cried out with surprise. This interruption cost her child his nearly attained immortality. Isis discovered herself, and obtained the pillar in which was concealed the corpse of her husband. She opened it, and took out the coffin, and left the shell of the tree at Byblus, where, Plutarch says, it still was in his days.\* Isis, supposing herself alone, opened the coffin and wept over Osiris. Melicerta, a son of the king, looking at her, was struck dead by a terrible glance from the offended goddess. The Egyptians paid divine honours to this unfortunate person under the name of Maneros. Isis ultimately returned to Egypt with the recovered body of her husband.

The murder of Osiris and Horus by Typhon became in Greece the rape of Proserpine by Pluto, and the destruction of Iacchus by the Titans ; the voyage of Isis in search of her husband was the wandering of Ceres in search of her daughter ; the restoration of Horus to life, and the recovery of the body of Osiris, were the resuscitation of Iacchus and the finding of

\* Plutarch, *Is. et Os.* 50.

Proserpine. The details of the stories are so coincident that no one can doubt the identity.

Isis represented mystically the earth—the passive or feminine principle of production. Her surname was *Mouth*\*—Mother, and her own name, *Isi*,† meant the fertility of the earth. She was Mother-Earth, the literal original of  $\Delta\eta\ \mu\acute{\eta}\tau\eta\rho$ , Demeter or Ceres. Herodotus‡ says expressly that they were the same. There was a very ancient temple at Athens dedicated to the Earth, and this was distinct from Ceres; but subsequently these two divinities became completely confounded together,§ and their names indicated the goddess of nature, the queen of all things, the giver of riches, the mother of all the plants and of all the animals.

The introduction of agriculture necessitates the enactment, and promotes the observance, of some kinds of laws. Hence Ceres was called  $\Theta\epsilon\sigma\mu\omicron\zeta\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma$ , legifera, lawgiver.

Osiris was the active or masculine principle of production—the husband of Isis. Together they gave birth to Horus, the mystical symbol of the visible or manifested world. He was surnamed *Kaimin*—visible.|| The Greeks altered the fable a little, but the meaning was the same. Proserpine was the seminal principle, which is carried under the earth, or, as the Egyptians said, killed. Horus was torn to pieces and Isis restored him to life—an allegory which Plutarch does not dare to explain, but says that it is extremely difficult to penetrate the sense of it. It seems this, that every part of the visible creation is, sooner or later, to be decomposed, and perhaps, as they thought, to be resolved into the mother earth. Earth reproduces all things.

\* Is. et Os. 56.

† Jablonsk. Path. Ægypt. II. p. 32.

‡ Euterp. ubi supra.

§ —————  $\Delta\eta\mu\acute{\eta}\tau\eta\rho\ \Theta\epsilon\iota\delta\,,$   
 $\Gamma\eta\ \delta'\ \acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\,,\ \delta\acute{\nu}\omicron\mu\alpha\ \delta'\,,\ \delta\acute{\rho}\omicron\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu\ \beta\omicron\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota\,,\ \kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\iota.$

Bacchac, vv. 275, 276.

|| Is. et Os. 56.

Bishop Warburton, who perhaps discovered more ingenuity than sound judgment in his views of the nature of the Greek mysteries, entertained a general opinion that their ultimate object was to teach to the initiated a pure theism, and to inculcate the certainty and the importance of a future state of rewards and punishments. I am led by the arguments of Villoison and Sainte-Croix\* to doubt the accuracy of this, and to believe, on the contrary, that the doctrine of the mysteries was a pure pantheism, hylozoism, or, as it has been named, in more modern ages from a very remarkable philosopher, Spinosism.† Although the language of many of the ancient writers is ambiguous upon this subject, the result seems to be that in the Eleusinian sanctuary, and in the Pythagorean schools, the same doctrine was taught in secret concerning the Deity and the state of the soul after death—a doctrine which struck at the root of the popular religion by supposing, on the one hand, a divine unity, whilst on the other that unity was made to consist in a deification or apotheosis of nature, the common parent of all things.

Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.

The Creator and the creature were an omnipresent One, manifested in various forms, under various relations, and producing and absorbing all things. The spirits of men were particles or *sections* of the great

\* *Recherches sur les Mystères du Paganisme*; one of the best books that can be read for a compendious view of this subject.

† *Theism*—the belief in the being of one God different from any modification of the material universe; *Pantheism*—belief in one God identical with, or actually constituting the life of, the material universe; *Hylozoism* (ὕλη, ζῶν)—life of the subject-matter of the world, and the same with Pantheism; Spinosism—substantially the same also, from Benedict Spinoza, a Dutch philosopher, according to which doctrine God—

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent;  
Spreads undivided; operates unspent.

POPE, *Essay on Man*.

Spirit of the Universe, and after the dissolution of the body were re-united to it. Merged in the bosom of the common Nature, they lost all individual existence, and were incapable of reward or punishment. The bodies of men were resolved into their constituent and cognate elements of matter, and passed in an infinite revolution into other integral forms. There was no death in nature, but change only. This was the palin-genesia or resurrection; this was the metempsychosis or transition of souls.

Nature, therefore, alone was the divinity of the Eleusinian mysteries.

The gods of the popular religion, as I have already suggested, were of two sorts: first, the personified forms, functions, and powers of the material world, in conjunction with some of the passions and moral qualities of man also personified; and, secondly, deceased heroes, benefactors of mankind, in various ways, as Hercules, Æsculapius, Castor, Pollux, and others:—

Inventas qui vitam excoluere per artes,  
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.\*

Now the introduction of agriculture, and the consequent reclaiming of men from a savage state, were amongst the greatest benefits ever bestowed by man upon man: hence many of the Eleusinian rites had reference to the invention of seeds and the exercise of husbandry; and the apotheosis of these primary friends of humanity,

\* “There were reckoned above human honours, honours heroic and divine: in the attribution and distribution of which honours, we see, antiquity made this difference;—that whereas founders and uniters of states and cities, lawgivers, extirpers of tyrants, fathers of the people, and other eminent persons in civil merit, were honoured but with the titles of Worthies or Demi-gods, such as were Hercules, Theseus, Minos, Romulus, and the like; on the other side, such as were inventors and authors of new arts, endowments, and commodities towards man’s life, were ever consecrated amongst the gods themselves, as were Ceres, Bacchus, Mercurius, Apollo, and others.”—BACON, *Adv. of Learning*, B. I.

and pre-eminently that of Ceres, as the civiliser of mankind, was the principal object of exhibition to the initiated.\*

Hymn to  
Bacchus.

But to return to the poems, from which I have wandered too long. Amongst the smaller hymns, that entitled "Bacchus or the Pirates" is particularly worthy of attention. The picturesqueness and vigour of design in this little poem are very remarkable; the language and versification are beautiful. The story is the metamorphosis, by Bacchus, of all but one of a crew of pirates into dolphins or porpoises, and of their vessel into a vine-tree; and is the original of similar narratives in Ovid,† Propertius,‡ and Seneca.§

Hymn to  
Mars.

In the Hymn to Mars, which contains no fable or story, and is something similar to the philosophical hymns of a much more modern time, is contained a piece of astronomy, something later in date than the Homeric age, and involving a representation at variance with the popular account of the god of war:—

————— πυραυγέα κύκλον ἐλίσσω  
αἰθέρος ἐπταπύροις ἐνὶ τεύρεσιν, ἔνθα σε πῶλοι  
ζαφλεγέες τριτάτης ὑπὲρ ἄντυγος αἰὲν ἔχουσι.‖

————— Thou thy fiery circle roll'st  
'Mid the sev'n wand'ring stars of heav'n, where thee  
Thy flaming steeds on the third chariot's wheel  
Bear ever.

The poet counts from Saturn through Jupiter to Mars. The word *τύραννος* ¶ also is used in this hymn, but is not to be found in the Iliad or Odyssey.

\* *Mystery* is derived from the word *μύειν*, either simply to close the mouth, or to wink, or half shut the eyes. *Initiate* is from *initium*; because, according to Cicero, in the mysteries, men received the *beginnings* or principles of a superior knowledge.

† Metam. III. 606.

‡ III. 15. 25.

§ Œdip. 449. This story also will put the reader in mind of Ariel.

‖ V. 6-8.

¶ V. 5.



In one of the Hymns to Minerva, a very spirited picture is given of the fable of that goddess springing "all armed" from the head of Jupiter:—

Hymn to  
Minerva.

—— τὴν αὐτὸς ἐγγείνατο μητίετα Ζεὺς  
σεμνῆς ἐκ κεφαλῆς, πολέμη' ἰα τεύχε' ἔχουσαι,  
χρύσεια, παμφανόωντα· σέεας δ' ἔχε πάντας ἱρώοντας  
ἀθανάτους· ἡ δὲ πρόσθεν Διὸς Αἰγιδόχοιο  
ἐσσυμένως ὤρουσεν ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο καρῆνου,  
σείσας ὅξυν ἄκοντα· μέγας δ' ἐλελίξετ' ὄλυμπος  
δεινὸν ὑπ' ὀμφερίμης γλαυκῶπιδος· ἀμφὶ δὲ γαῖα  
σμερδαλέον ἰάχην· ἐκινήθη δ' ἄρα πόντος  
κύμασι πορφυρέοισι κυκώμενος.\*

—— Her the counsellor Jove,  
In golden arms all shining, did beget,  
Out of his awful head. Amazement seized  
The gazing deities, what time she burst  
Forth rushing from the Ægis-bearer's front,  
And shook a pointed dart;—the vast heav'n quaked  
Dreadful beneath the Azure-eyed;—the earth  
Groan'd terribly the while;—the sea was moved  
With all his dark blue waves.†

An acquaintance with the Homeric hymns is not only to be recommended to all students, for the sake of the fine poetry which they contain; but also because they present the original form and colouring of many of the mythological fables of the Greeks, which, in the course of succeeding ages, underwent great changes in one and the other. An accurate knowledge of the popular theogony and theology in their successive variations is indispensable to a masterly view of the poetry of the Greeks; without it, a thousand allusions will escape notice—a thousand passages will be imperfectly or not at all understood. Perhaps the importance of this branch of good scholarship has not been sufficiently considered in our great schools in

Mythology.

\* V. 4-12.

† This passage evidently suggested to Milton the hint for his grand description of Sin breaking forth from the head of Satan.

modern times; at least, it seems clear, from the old editions of the classic poets, that it was formerly much more an object of learned study than at present. It is from the Homeric poems, in general, that we may best learn the character and bearings of the popular religion of the Greeks—that which the old heroic poets made familiar to the most humble, and with which the almost exclusive devotion and the splendid achievements of the arts, associated feelings of fondness and of admiration in the hearts of the noblest of their countrymen. The sailor in the Piræus invoked the god; the philosopher in the academy meditated on the power or law or attribute; but both stopped to gaze at, and, gazing, almost equally admired the shape in which Phidias or Apelles represented the sailor's god and the wise man's allegory. But, independently of this not unimportant consideration, there is, as I have said before, so much beautiful and vigorous poetry in these hymns of the old heroic sort, that no one who aspires to a complete knowledge of the first manner of the Greek literature, should be content without having read them through frequently and with attention.

## THE HOMERIC EPIGRAMS.

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UNDER the title of Epigrams are classed a few verses on different subjects, chiefly addresses Epigrams. to cities or private individuals. There is one short Hymn to Neptune, which seems out of its place here. In the fourth epigram Homer is represented as speaking of his blindness and his itinerant life :—

*κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ, τὴν μοι θεὸς ὥπασε γεινομένῳ περ,  
τλήσομαι, ἀκράαντα φέρων τετληότι θυμῷ·  
οὐδὲ τι μοι φίλα γυῖα μένειν ἱεραῖς ἐν ἀγυαῖς  
Κύμης ὀρμαίνουσι, μέγας δὲ με θυμὸς ἐπείγει  
δῆμον ἐς ἀλλοδαπῶν ἵεναι ὀλίγον περ εὐόντα.\**

The fate, which God allotted at my birth,  
With patient heart will I endure on earth;  
But not in Cumæ's sacred streets to dwell,  
Idle for ever thus, like I so well,  
As, my great mind still leading me before,  
Weak though I be, to seek a foreign shore.

The Poet addresses also the following thoughtful couplet to Thestorides :—

*Θεστορίδῃ, θνητοῖσιν ἀνωϊστων πολέων περ,  
οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται νοῖς ἀνθρώποισι.†*

Many the things obscure, Thestorides,  
But nought obscurer than the mind of man!

I reserve some remarks on the very peculiar charac-

\* Epig. IV. v. 13–17.

† Epig. VI.

ter of the Greek epigram till hereafter : it is sufficient at present to say, that it is so far from being the same with the epigram of modern times, that sometimes it is completely the reverse. In general, the small pieces in Ben Jonson, Herrick, Waller, and perhaps, occasionally, in Moore, give a better notion of the Greek epigrams than any other species of modern composition.\*

\* For a very elegant essay on the character of the Greek epigram, I refer the reader to the preface to Mr. Merivale's late edition to Bland's Anthology; a charming work, and deserving universal acceptance amongst scholars.

## THE HOMERIC FRAGMENTS.

THE Fragments, as they are called, consist of a few scattered lines, which are said to have Fragments. been formerly found in the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the other supposed works of Homer, and to have been omitted as spurious, or dropped by chance, from their ostensible context. Besides these, there are some passages from the Little Iliad, and a string of verses taken from Homer's answers in the old work, called the Contest of Homer and Hesiod, which I have mentioned before. A passage from the Little Iliad, to which I have previously alluded, is worth notice, as containing an account of the fortunes of Æneas utterly at History of Æneas. variance both with the Iliad, the Hymn to Venus, and the Æneid, and also as showing the tone and style of these works, which were so popular in former ages, but which have now almost entirely perished. The subject of the Little Iliad was the continuation of the Trojan war from the death of Hector.

αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλῆος μεγαθύμου φαίδιμος υἱὸς  
 Ἑκτορέην ἄλοχον ἀτάγεν κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας·  
 παῖδα δ' ἑλὼν ἐκ κόλπου εὐπλοκάμοιο τιθήνης,  
 ῥίψε, πρὸς τεταγὼν, ἀπὸ πύργου· τὸν δὲ πεισύντα  
 ἔλλαθε προφύρας Ἰάνατες καὶ μοῖρα κραταίῃ·  
 ἐκ δ' ἔειπ' Ἀνδρομάχην, ἡδύζωνι παράκοιτιν  
 Ἑκτορος· ἦν τέ οἱ αὐτᾶ ἀριστῆες παναχαιῶν  
 δῶκαν ἔχειν, ἐπὶ κρον ἀμειζόμενοι γέρας ἀιδρί·  
 αὐτὸν τ' Ἀγχίσαο γόνον κλυτὸν ἱπποδάμοιο,

*Αἰνεΐαν, ἐν νηυσὶν ἐβήσατο ποντιπόροισιν,  
ἐκ πάντων Δαΐαῶν, ἀγέμεν γέρας ἔξοχον ἄλλων.\**

But great Achilles' glorious son led down  
The wife of Hector to the hollow ships;  
And from the bosom of the fair-hair'd nurse  
Seized by the foot her child, and from the tower  
Hurl'd headlong to dark death and final fate.  
He out of all chose Hector's bright-zoned spouse,  
Andromache, whom the assembled chiefs  
Gave to the Hero, valour's meet reward.  
And he Anchises' famous son embark'd  
Captive Æneas in the seaward ship,  
'Midst all the Greeks a great selected prize.

There is a very remarkable couplet amongst these fragments, found indeed in Plato,† but which seems almost Christian in its turn of thought. That thought was never expressed with more brevity or energy than thus:—

*Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις  
ἄμμι δίδου· τὰ δὲ λυγρὰ καὶ εὐχομένων ἀτάλαλλε.*

Ask'd and unask'd, Thy blessings give, O Lord!  
The evil, though we ask it, from us ward!

Half of the following is also found in Hesiod:‡—

————— *ἀεὶ Θεῷ εὐχέ' ἀνακτι,  
ἧ μὲν ὅτ' εὐνάζῃ καὶ ὅταν φάος ἱερὸν ἔλθῃ.*

————— Pray always to the King divine,  
At bed-time, and when sacred dawn doth shine.

\* *Fragm. e Ttetze ad Lycophr. 1263.*

† *Alcibid. II.*

‡ *Op. et Di. v. 339.*



## CONCLUSION.

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IN parting with Homer, I cannot forbear once more, and for the last time, earnestly advising such of my readers, as are really desirous of acquiring a pure and healthful taste and a clear and vigorous style, to study the Homeric poems with care and perseverance. It is too generally the case that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, from the comparative facility of their construction, are classed as *school* books only; but in truth they are fit to be the studies of every age and of all men. If there be such a thing as a royal road to a just and manly feeling of what is great and animated in poetry, it is to be found in a knowledge of Homer. To be Homeric, is to be natural, lively, rapid, energetic, harmonious; the ancient critics used the epithet as a collective term to express these qualities, however exhibited. They called Sophocles, Homeric—Pindar, Homeric—Sappho, Homeric; because all three have that clearness, picturesqueness, and force which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* display in perfection. Homer always seems to write in good spirits, and he rarely fails to put his readers in good spirits also. To do this is a prerogative of genius in all times; but it is especially so of the genius of primitive or heroic poetry. In Homer, head and heart speak and are spoken to together. Morbid peculiarities of thought or temper have no place in him. He is as wide and general as the air we breathe and the earth upon which we tread, and his vivacious spirit

animates, like a Proteus, a thousand different forms of intellectual production—the life-preserving principle in them all. He is as the mighty strength of his own deep-flowing Ocean—

———— βαθυρρεΐται μέγα σθένος Ὀκεανοῖο,  
 ἐξ οὗ περ πάντες ποταμοὶ, καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα,  
 καὶ πᾶσαι κρήναι, καὶ φρεΐατα μακρὰ ἰάουσιν.\*

Whence all the rivers, all the seas have birth,  
 And every fountain, every well on earth.

\* Π. Φ'. XXI. 195–197.

THE END.

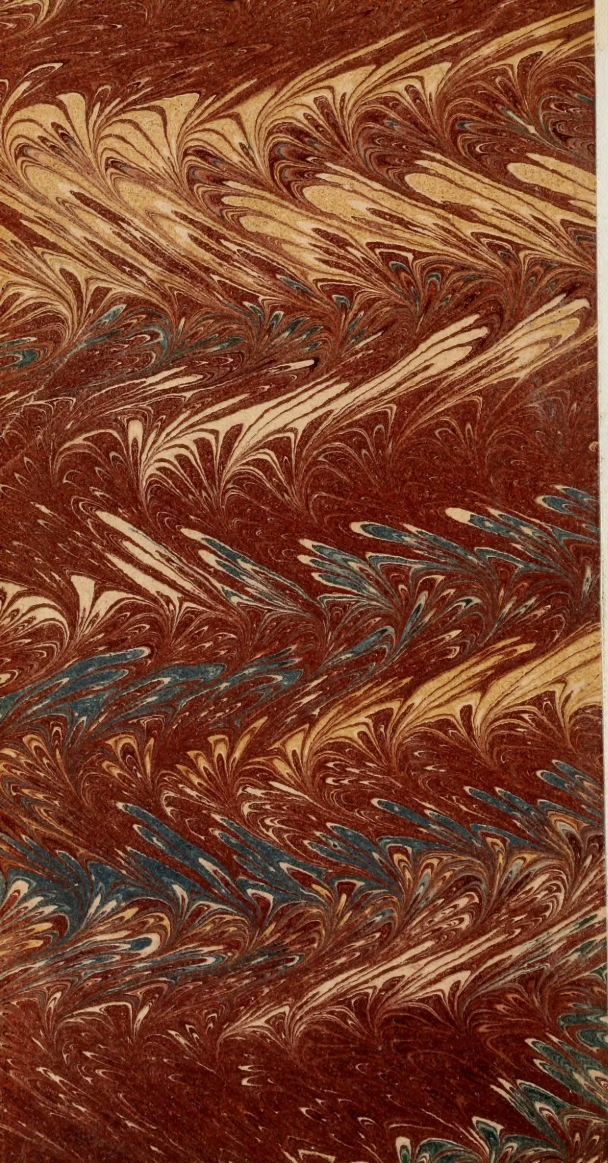
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